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ABSTRACT

This New Zealand project was intended to develop and test a framework for early child care practitioners to undertake their own evaluation of implementation of Te Whariki, the New Zealand early childhood curriculum, in a range of early child care centers. This report marks the completion of the project's phase 1, involving focus group interviews and consultations, and phase 2, involving ethnographic studies completed in seven early childhood centers. The report describes the consultations and methodologies, but also includes insight into processes and stages of the development of a proposed framework for evaluation. The final section of the report outlines an approach to evaluation that would be the starting point of the action research in phase 3 of the project. The report's six appendices include a discussion document on connecting assessment to evaluation, questions for the focus group interviews, and "trees" for categorizing observational data. (LBT)

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EVALUATING EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMES USING TE WHĀRIKI

FINAL REPORT ON PHASES ONE AND TWO TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



**Valerie N Podmore and Helen May
with Diane Mara**

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**EVALUATING EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMES USING
THE STRANDS AND GOALS OF TE WHĀRIKI,
THE NATIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM**

**FINAL REPORT ON PHASES ONE AND TWO TO THE
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

27 February 1998

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New Zealand Council for Educational Research
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project was developed within the political and pedagogical context of the later 1990s, which includes: a strong political climate of accountability in education; strengthening requirements for early childhood programmes to be accountable; and emergent initiatives to develop criteria for programme evaluation. Selected examples of relevant initiatives include:

- The final version of Te Whāriki which contained more explicitly stated outcomes for children and expectations of programmes, evaluation, and assessment (Ministry of Education, 1996).
- The 1997 revised Desirable Objectives and Practices document (known as the revised DOPs) which sets out the qualities of a higher standard of provision in relation to new funding criteria, and its supporting documents currently being developed by the Ministry of Education.
- The Ministry of Education's research on assessment, co-ordinated by Margaret Carr: *Project for Assessing Children's Experiences*.
- The Ministry of Education's professional development programmes on Te Whāriki, which, along with its own research and trials, indicate the beginning of some good work by some centres in evaluation using Te Whāriki, and the need for active support for centres in this endeavour.

A key rationale for this project was to ensure that these initiatives in relation to programme quality and Te Whāriki were grounded in New Zealand-based research on quality, curriculum, and programmes.

The research aimed:

- To develop a cohesive framework for evaluating a centre's implementation of Te Whāriki, New Zealand's national early childhood curriculum;
- To ensure that the framework developed is mindful of the range of ages of children, as well as what goes on in the different kinds of settings early childhood centres provide. (i.e., it is, like Te Whāriki, an inclusive curriculum document). A related intention was to identify some focused contexts for observation and evaluation that are valid in each setting.

It was also evident that such a framework would need:

- (a) some kind of measures that can identify both good quality and poor quality practice; and
- (b) a process for reflection and actions.

The first two phases of the project were designed to consult key informants through focus group interviews and an advisory committee, and to establish and carry out ethnographic studies of early childhood centres. These phases addressed research question one:

1. What are the key elements of programme quality in relation to the Strands and Goals of Te Whāriki, which should be the focus of evaluation practice?

A proposed third phase, focused on action research, addresses research question two:

2. How can these features which characterise effective practice in early childhood centres be implemented into a framework for curriculum evaluation?

A fourth and final proposed phase involves the production of a resource for use by early childhood practitioners in centres.

This draft report marks the completion of phases one and two of the project. During the first phase, focus group interviews and consultations were carried out in three geographic regions. These workshops/interviews contributed to the development of a more detailed procedure for the ethnographic observations. Some of the main themes emerging from the focus group interviews and consultations were:

- The development of an evaluation framework should be guided by the principles of Te Whāriki;
- The ethnographic observations should be designed to look across the five Strands of Te Whāriki (as in the assessment project);
- Emerging frameworks for assessment and evaluation would need to be closely connected;
- An evaluatory framework should allow services or centres to select priority contexts and areas for self-evaluation.

During phase two, week-long ethnographic studies were completed in seven early childhood centres. The centres included childcare centres, kindergartens, and playcentres. Centres selected for inclusion in the ethnographic studies had been identified by professional development teams and advisers to the project as being "effective practice" in terms of working with Te Whāriki. Summary case studies of the seven centres were constructed from the observational and interview data, focusing on the five Strands of Te Whāriki. They were developed for research purposes only; the researchers were not evaluating the seven centres.

During the process of these ethnographic studies, the concept of the "Teaching Story" emerged. For each centre, the researchers prepared an overall summary Teaching Story across the Strands of Te Whāriki. The process began by developing Learning Stories for children (drawing on Margaret Carr's framework), then constructing Teaching Stories for individual adults, using the concept of "Responsive, Respectful, Reciprocal Relationships", and doing observations of specific learning/teaching contexts as defined by each centre. Subsequently, the overall Teaching Story for each centre was developed by scrutinising the observational transcripts focused on adults, children, and specific learning and teaching contexts, checked against categories developed and analysed using NUD*IST (a computer program for non-numerical, qualitative data analysis).

The researchers developed, in addition, a summary of the Teaching Stories across the centres. This summary was not constructed for evaluation purposes. It provided a useful summary of examples of how different centres demonstrated their philosophies with regard to implementing the five Strands of Te Whāriki. This a major difference between the research process in these particular centres and any future evaluation framework which must be able to operate in less effective centres as well.

The final chapter outlines an approach to evaluation that would be the beginning point of the

action research of phase three. The Learning and Teaching Story Framework uses "a child's voice" to provide the initial questions centres need to ask of themselves as they begin their journey of evaluation. Five questions, connected to the Strands of Te Whāriki and asked from a child's perspective, show a progression of learning and teaching challenges (not necessarily in sequential order):

"How do you appreciate and understand my interests and abilities and those of my family?"

"How do you meet my daily needs with care and sensitive consideration?"

"How do you engage my mind, offer challenges, and extend my world?"

"How do you invite me to listen and communicate, and respond to my own particular efforts?"

"How do you encourage and facilitate my endeavours to be part of the wider group?"

This report describes the consultations and methodologies, but it also includes insights into processes and stages of the development of the proposed Learning and Teaching Stories framework for evaluation and assessment, and it raises questions for the next phase of the research.

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Pam Cubey and Sarah Te One made valued contributions to the fieldwork in centres, and to several of the draft case studies. Barb Bishop contributed substantially to the NUD*IST analyses of the data. We also acknowledge Roberta Tiatia's word processing work on the manuscript and on the presentation of the graphical and tabulated material in the report.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This project builds upon the work of the National Early Childhood Curriculum to develop and trial an evaluatory framework for practitioners to undertake their own evaluation of programmes in a range of early childhood centres. The aims of this research are:

- To develop a cohesive framework for evaluating a centre's implementation of Te Whāriki;
- To ensure that the framework developed is mindful of the range of ages of children, as well as what goes on in the different kinds of settings early childhood centres provide (i.e., it is, like Te Whāriki, an inclusive curriculum document). A related intention is to identify some focused contexts for observation and evaluation that are valid in each setting.
- Finally, such a framework will need:
 - (a) some kind of measures that can identify both good quality and poor quality practice; and
 - (b) a process for reflection and actions.

There are two research questions. The first two phases of the project were designed to consult key informants through focus group interviews and an advisory committee, and to establish and carry out ethnographic studies of early childhood centres. These phases address research question one:

1. What are the key elements of programme quality in relation to the Strands and Goals of Te Whāriki, which should be the focus of evaluation practice?

A proposed third phase, focused on action research, addresses research question two below; and a proposal is currently under consideration by the Ministry of Education.

2. How can these features which characterise effective practice in early childhood centres be implemented into a framework for curriculum evaluation?

A fourth and final proposed phase involves the production of a resource for use by early childhood practitioners in centres.

This report marks the completion of phases one and two of the project. The tasks completed during the first phase included focus group interviews and consultations (January to June 1997). As a result of the workshops/interviews held with these groups, a more detailed procedure for the ethnographic observations was developed. During phase two, ethnographic studies were completed in seven early childhood centres (July 1997 to February 1998). Case studies of these centres were constructed, focusing on the five strands of Te Whāriki. This report describes the consultations and methodologies, but it also includes insights into processes and stages of the development of a proposed framework for evaluation. The final section outlines an approach to evaluation that would be the beginning point of the action research of phase three.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

The political and pedagogical context of the later 1990s convinced us that this proposed project was necessary, given:

- (a) the strong political climate of accountability in education;
- (b) the strengthening requirements for early childhood programmes to be accountable in terms of quality and standards;
- (c) the various initiatives already under way to develop criteria for programme evaluation.

These include:

- The final version of Te Whāriki which contained more explicitly stated outcomes for children and expectations of programmes, evaluation, and assessment (Ministry of Education, 1996).
- The commencement of the Government's quality funding initiative in 1996 which identified key structural components of quality that centres needed to comply with to access new funding.
- The 1997 revised Desirable Objectives and Practices document (known as the revised DOPs) which sets out the qualities of a higher standard of provision in relation to new funding criteria, and its supporting documents currently being developed by the Ministry of Education.
- Work by The Early Childhood Development Unit to identify quality criteria and standards, with a possible view to developing an accreditation model of evaluation.
- Data emerging from the Education Review Office (ERO) on low quality and noncompliance of quite a few early childhood programmes. ERO also has initiatives under way to develop quality criteria.
- The work of individual early childhood organisations which are addressing the issue of quality more seriously, for example the New Zealand Childcare Association's Quality Register for its centre members, launched in 1997 (Cole, Hubbard, Hale, & Williams, 1997).
- New Zealand research emerging which provides sound data on the quality of centres. Anne Smith's research on infant centres (1996a) and NZCER's Competent Children Project (Wylie, Thompson, & Hendricks, 1996) both show clear connections between the quality of centres, and the experiences and outcomes for children. Both identify the existence of low quality centres.
- An increasing awareness and knowledge in New Zealand concerning theoretical approaches towards supporting and extending children's learning and thinking (Meade, 1997; Meade with Cubey, 1995).
- The Ministry's own professional development programmes on Te Whāriki, along with its own research and trials (Haggerty & Hubbard, 1994), indicate the beginning of some good work by some centres in evaluation using Te Whāriki. This work also indicated that centres still need considerable support and help in this endeavour.

- The Ministry of Education's research on assessment, co-ordinated by Margaret Carr: *Project for Assessing Children's Experiences* (1998).
- The many centres which are developing evaluation processes at the behest of ERO requirements. While some are innovative and sound there are many that are not so soundly based, too time consuming, or are generating paper for no clear purpose.

A key rationale for this project is to ensure that the initiatives in relation to programme quality and Te Whāriki described above are grounded in New Zealand-based research on quality, curriculum, and programmes. Te Whāriki, as a curriculum framework, is unique, meaning that international models of assessment and evaluation while useful as a background resource are of less use in a specific sense.

The issues of assessment and evaluation are complementary, but not the same. It was important that alongside the Ministry of Education's early childhood initiatives on research on assessment there was a parallel project on evaluation. This approach is supported by the literature review on quality evaluation of early childhood programmes, prepared for this project (Cubey & Dalli, 1996).

Recent contract work for the Ministry of Education on quality early childhood education has produced observational data on centre quality (e.g., Farquhar, 1993; Smith, 1995). This project complements and extends previous observational work in early childhood centres. It adds new dimensions, and addresses topics not previously investigated which are relevant to policy and early childhood educational practice. The project provides detailed information at the centre level specifically focused on Te Whāriki and its implementation in "effective practice" early childhood centres.

Given the above contexts, it was timely that there be comprehensive and focused research designed to guide management and staff towards appropriate evaluation processes for their own programmes.

3. CONSULTATIONS AND DOCUMENT COLLECTIONS

The first phase of the project was primarily a preparatory one through consultations and then collection of material on evaluation and on the implementation of Te Whāriki. The focus group interviews which followed were a major source of data. The researchers collected information about a related research project in Britain, and documents and advice from researchers in New Zealand who are working on relevant projects.

Pascal-Bertram, Evaluation and Effectiveness Project, United Kingdom

The Effective Early Learning (EEL) project is a major research project designed to implement a framework for the evaluation of various aspects of quality in early childhood centres. It is a much broader project than ours which is focusing on the aspect of curriculum. Contact with Christine Pascal and Anthony Bertram had been made earlier by Margaret Carr and so they were aware of the development work of Te Whāriki. Dr Anne Meade visited Christine Pascal in late 1996 and was given copies of the training workbook, and the manual and video (Pascal, 1996). Sophie Bringzen also visited this project as part of her Margaret Blackwell travelling scholarship. The Institute and Wellington College of Education now have copies of their publications. We have also made contact directly and plan to meet when we take a symposium on assessment and evaluation to the 1998 European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) conference in Spain (Christine Pascal and Tony Bertram are members of the standing committee of EECERA).

This project has an interesting conceptual framework, *A Conceptual Framework for Developing Effectiveness in Early Learning Settings* (Pascal & Bertram, 1996, in Pascal, 1996). Their model focuses on two key interactive processes that provide good insight into quality. These two key "black box" interactions are "child involvement" and "adult engagement". Their approach is useful and avoids a process that tries to measure everything. A key difference, though, is that the Pascal and Bertram framework is one which scores effectiveness in each of these areas based on a progressive scale. Their model for effectiveness specifies separate variables related to the context (a "cultural determinant"), the process ("culturally determining"), and the outcome ("culturally determined"). Another useful insight, then, was the separation out of contextual aspects of quality and the evaluation process. Recognising that there are important connections between the context and the evaluation process, the model we are developing does this as well.

Te Whāriki Literature

Two volumes of Te Whāriki papers have been written or edited by Margaret Carr and Helen May (Carr & May, 1993; May & Carr, 1996). Te Whāriki Papers Two (1996) was most pertinent as it collected together 10 papers from people commenting on, or reporting research on, the early implementation of Te Whāriki. These indicated:

- Innovative work on programme planning through professional development projects.
- Key policy issues about the fabric of support required by centres to work with Te Whāriki.
- Diverse needs of different centres and organisations in relation to Te Whāriki.
- Importance of a participatory approach.

Maggie Haggerty's study *Using Video to Work with Te Whāriki: The Experience of Five Early Childhood Centres* (1996) shows similar findings and demonstrated an innovative approach to enabling participation, and creating a framework for debating and critiquing practice through the use of video. Her follow-on thesis (Haggerty, 1998) (submitted for an MEd) provides firstly an excellent study of the theoretical context of Te Whāriki within the international spectrum of curriculum theory and critical pedagogy, and secondly, it demonstrates the role action research and professional development support can play in the process of reflection, planning, and evaluation.

Ministry of Education Reports on Te Whāriki

We had hoped to gain official access to the Ministry's reports by contractors of the professional development contracts for implementing Te Whāriki. According to some contractors and writers, these reports contain in-depth appraisal and comment on some of the realities for centres in implementing Te Whāriki.

Evaluation Literature

Pam Cubey conducted a literature survey of the evaluation literature in relation to early childhood programmes. This has since been published, with support from the Sixth Early Childhood Convention, as *Quality Evaluation of Early Childhood Education Programmes: A literature review* by Pam Cubey and Carmen Dalli, Institute for Early Childhood Studies, 1996. The concluding summary provided an invaluable guide to the key issues that underlie the design of any evaluation framework:

- (a) the importance of evaluation in relation to quality;
- (b) the need for the evaluation of a programme to be consistent with the philosophy and values underlying the curriculum (i.e., Te Whāriki);
- (c) the strong support from the literature of an approach to programme planning and evaluation which sits well with Te Whāriki.

This literature review was made available to all focus group interviewees. As an occasional publication of the Institute for Early Childhood Studies, this review has also been widely distributed and used among early childhood organisations and training groups endeavouring to address the issues of assessment and evaluation. This has generated considerable understanding of, and interest in, the project.

Project for Assessing Children's Experiences (Margaret Carr)

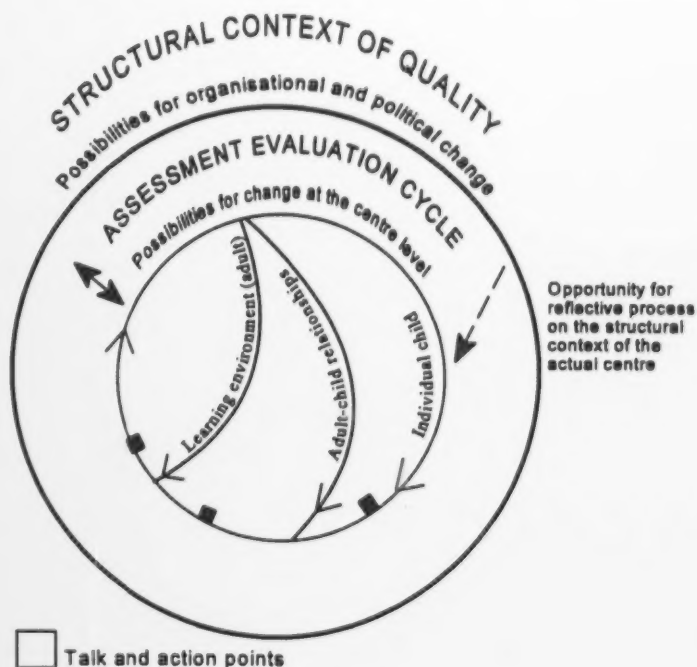
A meeting was held with Margaret Carr from the University of Waikato to gain an insight into the assessment project in relation to Te Whāriki. It was important to connect the assessment and evaluation processes. She prepared a paper suggesting a possible approach (Carr, 1997a, *see* appendix B). A key element in Margaret Carr's framework was the Learning Story in relation to each of the strands of Te Whāriki. The Learning Story was developed through observation by researchers and staff in early childhood centres.

During the meeting we jointly developed some draft models (*see*, for example, model 1(a)), which shows:

- the connections between evaluation and assessment;
- the connections between the evaluation and assessment processes and the broader structural frameworks of quality;
- the possibility of different cyclical processes of evaluation that did not always have to include individual assessment;
- opportunities for reflective discussion like Te Whāriki itself.

These received strong support from all the focus group interviewees.

Model 1 (a)
Model for Formative Assessment and Evaluation



Professor Anne Smith

A meeting was held with Anne Smith in Dunedin. Some summary points from the discussion are:

- Power relationships in a number of contexts would make an important focus for evaluation;
- That "joint attention" between children and adults is important (Smith, 1996b);
- The need for an evaluation process which allows teachers continually to reflect and question;
- The importance of capturing the long-term experience of individual children alongside a snapshot overview of a particular child at one time.

Summary

Beyond these specific consultations and collations, the actual focus interviews outlined in the next sections were major sources of data and documents showing evaluation in action in New Zealand early childhood centres.

4. FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

This first phase of the project was designed to consult key informants through focus group interviews, and an advisory committee. The intention was to address research question one:

1. What are the key elements of programme quality in relation to the strands and goals of Te Whāriki, which should be the focus of evaluation practice?

Participation and Procedures

One focus group interview was held in Wellington, a second in Dunedin, and the third in Auckland. Each group brought together a representative of different early childhood education service groups, and people involved in professional development. The three focus groups included practitioner representatives from childcare, kindergarten, and playcentre, and college of education lecturers and others involved in professional development.

Both of the principal researchers were present at each of the three focus group interviews. Their main role was that of "moderator" of the groups, drawing on the experiences and views of the informants (Watts & Ebbutt, 1987, p. 27). We (the three researchers) alternated responsibility for facilitating the groups and ensuring that the discussion was recorded appropriately. The time frame of 3 to 4 hours was tight for each of the sessions, but enabled considerable ground to be covered. Certainly more time would have been useful, but the 4 hours of work was intensive.

Recording methods included: recording the full interview on a laptop computer, and writing on whiteboards which produced printed copies. Sections of the recorded information on the white-boards were checked by the participants to ensure the records accurately summarised a collective view. These methods for recording the focus group interviews predominated in preference to using tape recording as the primary method. The intention was to have prompt feedback from the participants about the collective views recorded, in order to establish phase two of the research. After the first interview we refined the process to allow small groups in each interview to work directly on paper when responding to two of the questions. This was effective in gaining summarised, collective statements and views.

Key tasks for the focus groups were to:

- overview the literature review (Cubey & Dalli, 1996), with specific reference to the principles of evaluation, and the links with assessment and curriculum;
- provide information on processes currently being developed or under way in centres in relation to planning and evaluation using Te Whāriki;
- provide comment on the suggested four areas for the ethnographic research in early childhood centres (i.e., individual staff members, individual children, specific learning and teaching contexts or "happenings", specific strands and goals of Te Whāriki);
- provide suggestions for ways to make "space" in these areas for each centre to evaluate aspects of particular importance to its own curriculum "weaving";

- in a workshop setting, identify for each of the four areas a list of key indicators of good practice.

Some of the participants had been involved in work with, or in, early childhood centres on planning and evaluation using the framework of Te Whāriki (*see*, for example, Jordan, 1996; Lee, 1996). The participants were the initial "key informants" in this first phase, which leads to the development of the ethnographic study. The intention was to discuss and refine the observational methods and focus, drawing on the participants' experiences of self-evaluation and effective practice.

AN OVERVIEW OF TE WHĀRIKI IN ACTION

From the Key Informants

The time with the three focus groups provided the researchers with guidance and insight. First, the key informants presented an overview of their work to date with the implementation of Te Whāriki. Later, they focused on our specific questions, working as a group.

Implementation and Research: What is Going On?

The participants provided a brief presentation on their work in progress on planning and evaluation in relation to Te Whāriki. They brought to the focus groups their own or their organisation's experiences. They also provided a copy of any documents they had used or developed for planning and evaluation. These documents include notes on the implementation of quality planning, information from organisations and centres about programme planning requirements and processes, and notes on small-scale research studies in progress.

The major focus was on effective practice and evaluation in relation to individual children. This was most clearly evident at the Wellington focus group. Documents and experiences from the lower North Island show an emphasis on developing detailed cycles for profiling individual children.

There were some regional differences in the developing approaches to planning and evaluation. In Dunedin there were studies concerned with the effectiveness of the programme on children's learning outcomes. There was also concern among practitioners from the southern region about the confusion generated by having different models of professional development. Informants emphasised the need for a framework for evaluation, and for a framework which is relevant to the service's philosophy and the centre's own goals.

At the Auckland focus group, informants shared several sets of guidelines for centre staff to carry out curriculum planning, and for assessment and evaluation planning. One model outlines, for example, the need to evaluate the children, the programme, the centre, the staff, the curriculum areas, routines, and parent involvement (Bayes, 1997).

Organisational Perspectives: Responses to Te Whāriki

Informants from the early childhood groups commented on both positive aspects and specific difficulties concerned with planning and evaluation practice.

Positive Experiences of Planning and Evaluation

There was a wide range of positive comments about experiences, with some similarities across the practitioner groups. Some key positive points are:

- Te Whāriki provides a "framework" for practitioners to work from and evaluate from. Reflective questions are useful for instigating discussion with staff. "Knowledge, skills, and attitudes" provide concrete examples on which to base reflection for children. Te Whāriki provides the basis (or the "meat") for discussion on professional practice.
- The number of teachers/adults/staff who are excited about programme planning based on Te Whāriki is increasing.
- The implementation of Te Whāriki, for example, being involved in Te Whāriki professional development programmes, helps those participating to see themselves as part of the wider early childhood education community.
- The aims/strands of Te Whāriki have helped broaden the approach to observing and planning for children, for example, those aged under 2 years. Observations have become part of planning as well as training. Te Whāriki sits easily with playcentre philosophy of observing, and including family and community.

Difficulties

Some overall difficulties encountered by the organisations are: confusion in how to implement Te Whāriki and evaluate programmes using the document; time constraints and the amount of voluntary/unpaid time spent on evaluation and planning; practical difficulties of profiling individual children; regional variations in implementation; inequities in access to professional development and variations in the way professional development is carried out; wide variations in progress towards evaluation; and a need for more knowledge and familiarity with Te Whāriki, related theory, and evaluation. Our informants from the practitioner groups raised these specific points and issues:

- There is some confusion about Te Whāriki, how should practitioners use it, and on which goal should they focus?
- There is an issue of how to link assessment, evaluation, and planning goals.
- There are extremes, with some teachers/staff eager to be involved in professional development, but some not interested because they perceive they are "already doing it".
- There is concern about what to record and how to record it. Compulsory evaluation leads to difficulties and "introduces authoritarian elements". The responsive nature of curriculum and planning is not always understood.

A specific difficulty identified by representatives of **kindergartens** was group size. In some

areas, teacher turnover also makes it "difficult to work effectively with families". The number of children attending a kindergarten per day (for example, 90 children) makes detailed individual profiling difficult.

For **playcentres**, keeping written records can be a difficulty in terms of time and confidentiality: "It is a radical departure and a major shift to keep written records for purposes other than training."; "Focusing on an individual child may lead to overload with the large number of adults."; "There is a need to be very aware of the service and their different philosophical emphases" (for example, when looking at adult role, adults are being asked to observe their own infants and keep written records); "The reality is teaching every parent Te Whāriki, time is a major issue, and so is the language of Te Whāriki."

For **childcare centres**, lack of non-contact time means that time is a problem for evaluation and planning. Time is a priority, and sessional attendance makes it more difficult to do detailed individual profiles of children: "Te Whāriki is sometimes used to justify practices."

In general, representatives of the practitioner groups reported a range of positive experiences. One shared difficulty is the time involved in recording profiles of individual children as a basis for evaluation.

Focus Group Interview Questions

The set of questions prepared for the focus groups is found in appendix C. The findings from the focused discussions are summarised below.

- **What key elements of effective adult-child interaction should we focus on in our observations?**
- **In what ways can we evaluate the adult's role in constructing the environment for children?**

In each of the interviews, participants tended to collapse these questions together to think of key aspects of quality underlying the adult role, although it was quite possible to separate them in terms of application to children and/or the environment.

The broad themes that consistently arose were:

- adult responsiveness
- reciprocal relationships
- empowerment—power relationships
- respect.

It became apparent, and was demonstrated in follow-on paper work, that these holistic themes could apply (a) across both relationships with children and the environment, and (b) across the strands of Te Whāriki where they could be given a more targeted focus, for example, scaffolding with children, work with parents, access and equity for children as learners. In Dunedin and Auckland we asked participants to do this as a follow-on task once they had summarised their response to the questions. In Dunedin the group put forward the view that the framework could take the theme of "reciprocal relationships". They then identified key examples in relation to each

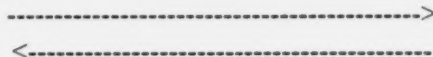
of the strands which could be a focus for evaluation. Below is a diagrammatic view of this.

Role of the Adult

RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS

constructing the learning environment	relationships with children
---------------------------------------	-----------------------------

examples or indicators could be developed for each



Reciprocal relationships include adults, parents, teachers, community.

This is theoretically underpinned by: ecological context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), joint attention (Rogoff, 1990; Smith, 1996b), joint problem solving, scaffolding (Rolfe, 1996; Vygotsky, 1987; Bruner, 1985), equal power (Smith, 1996c), sensitivity and respect (Howes, 1986; Gerber, 1984), involvement and engagement (Pascal, 1996), non-returnable moments (Meade, 1997), intersubjectivity (Rogoff, 1990), shared understandings, and responsive feedback (Howes, 1986).

We realised that, in each case, our participants were beginning with the Principles of Te Whāriki: particularly empowerment/whakamana (Principle one), and relationships/ngā hononga (Principle four). It could be possible, therefore, to take the Principle that *Young children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places, and things*, as a starting point. This Principle could be a prerequisite for the Principal that, *The early childhood curriculum should empower the child to learn and grow*.

- **What would be the most useful focus when observing individual children in relation to their experience with the strands and goals of Te Whāriki?**

There was a consensus that this aspect of the cycle should connect with the work of Margaret Carr and that the diagrammatic cycle of model 1(a) was appropriate. It was also accepted that it should not be necessary to include the assessment of individual children into every evaluatory cycle. This could make the process too cumbersome.

It was apparent in discussions with the different groups that the framework would need to be able to encompass a variety of ways of observing—assessing individual children. Some services who knew their children very well over the years would be approaching the task differently from services where there were lots of children whom they met only briefly, or services where it is the parents who are the staff and who do not wish to have to write lots about their own children.

It was felt that it was useful to observe children over time as well as in specific contexts. An important point raised was the importance of seeing children in relation to other children and not to always focus on the adult-child relationship.

- **What specific strands and goals of Te Whāriki would be the most appropriate to include as primary indicators of effective practice?**

There was a strong view that the framework needed to be holistic and encompass all the Strands,

but that it should be possible to identify some key indicators without necessarily working through each Goal. This was a view Margaret Carr had also strongly put to us. Her paper (appendix B) had suggested an approach that she was using in the assessment project that transcended all the strands.

In Auckland and in Dunedin the focus groups took key themes and applied them across the strands. An example of this kind of exercise in relation to "reciprocity" was:

WELLBEING	positive adult relationships, being in control, empowerment, sensitivity, respect
BELONGING	shared social space, inclusiveness
CONTRIBUTION	acceptance, confidence to contribute, individual differences
COMMUNICATION	joint attention, joint activity, responsiveness, opportunity for initiation
EXPLORATION	support and scaffold, learner in control, joint experience, balance of power, problem solving environments, independent learners and thinkers

- **How appropriate is it to have specific "happenings" as observational contexts for evaluating the implementation of Te Whāriki in early childhood centres?**

This question generated strong debate, with a view that there was too much variability across centres. On the other hand, there was a consensus that times like arrivals and departures and food time were useful in revealing high quality, and/or poor quality.

At the final focus group some broad learning and teaching contexts emerged that could apply to all programmes and encompass all strands:

- management of routines and groups (could include food, mat time, outings)
- extending thinking (could include, for example, manipulative play)
- creativity
- learning in the outdoors
- arrivals and departures
- adult activity (such as a staff meeting).

These were still too general and lacked the specificity that would eventually be needed. In the event, guided by the advisory committee, we asked centres themselves to identify their own key happenings, in the sense of identifying aspects of their programme in which Te Whāriki could be observed "in action". This worked successfully, and the areas listed above were in fact covered in the case study centre observations.

Further Consultations and Discoveries

1. *Advisory Committee*

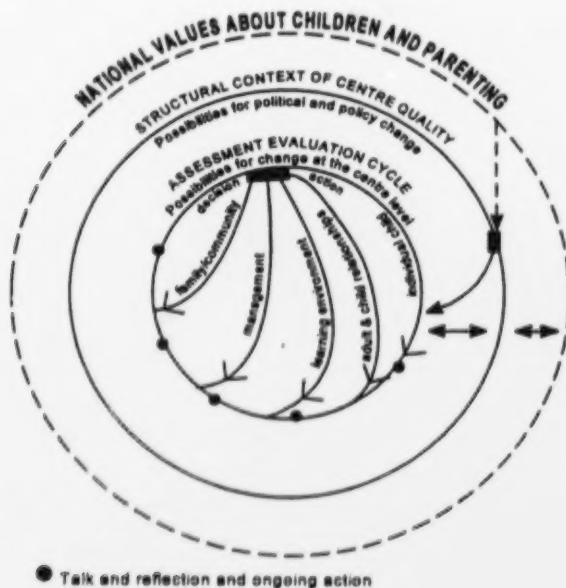
The initial model of evaluation and assessment provided the basis for discussion, leading to the development of the focus for the case study observations. The advisory committee, at its meeting on 3 June 1997, provided useful clarification and feedback on several issues:

- In the diagram on assessment and evaluation (model 1(a)), it was suggested that we needed to include management and families and community.
- Support for the approach to individual assessment of children's experiences developed by Margaret Carr, with the view that we should use it as a focus for some of the ethnographic observations.

2. *Ongoing Consultations and Discoveries*

At a meeting between Margaret Carr and Helen May at Waikato University on Friday, 6 June 1997, model 1(b) was developed. This model includes "management" and "family and community", and also sets the model within a "Bronfenbrenner-like" framework with the inclusion of "national values about children and parenting" which is used in the 1996 Te Whāriki document. This model was setting the contextual framework for assessment and evaluation but limiting the focus to aspects of practice that could be changed at the centre level. Yet there is recognition of the impact of the wider context on centre practice.

Model 1 (b) Model for Formative Assessment and Evaluation Using the Principles and Framework of Te Whāriki



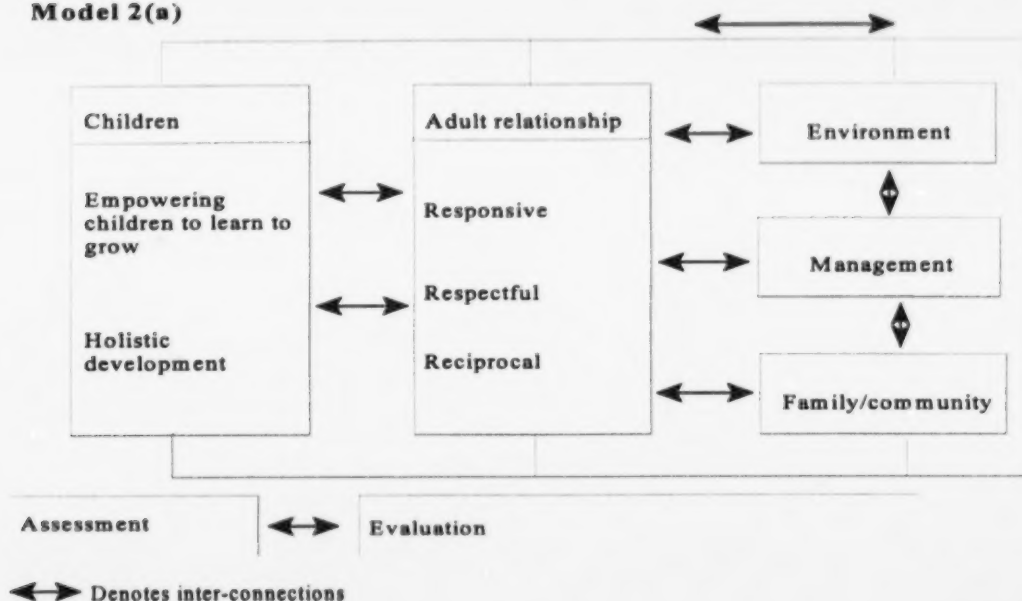
These discussions also led to the development of model 2(a), which sought to clarify:

- the key “relationship” connections that make up the focus for any evaluation
- the connections between evaluation and assessment
- the links to the Principles of Te Whāriki
- the central role that adults play as teachers (with children) and as facilitators (of the environment, with management, and with family and community).

Model 2 (a)

A Holistic Framework for Observation/Evaluation → Relationships

Model 2(a)



These are similarly reflected in model 3 which provides a preliminary framework for the analysis of the ethnographic observations. At this point we were clearer that “Management” was possibly problematic as a focus for this phase of the research project. Nevertheless it was important that there later be an opportunity for centres to reflect on the implications for management policies and processes of centre practice.

Model 3

Te Whāriki Evaluation: Preliminary Framework for Analyses of Ethnographic Observations

	Learning Stories Assessing children's experiences	Contexts for observation of child	Adult relationships (respectful, responsive, reciprocal)	Environment Places/things	Family/ community Management	Policies and processes
Belonging	Finding anything of interest here					
Wellbeing	Being involved					
Exploration	Engaging with challenge and persisting when difficulties arise					
Communication	Expressing a point of view					
Contribution	Taking responsibilities					

Adult Interviews

Interview (1) (Negotiating the context):

What learning and teaching contexts (originally "happenings") do you suggest we observe in relation to children to see an aspect of Te Whāriki successfully in action?

Interview (2) (Beginning the analysis):

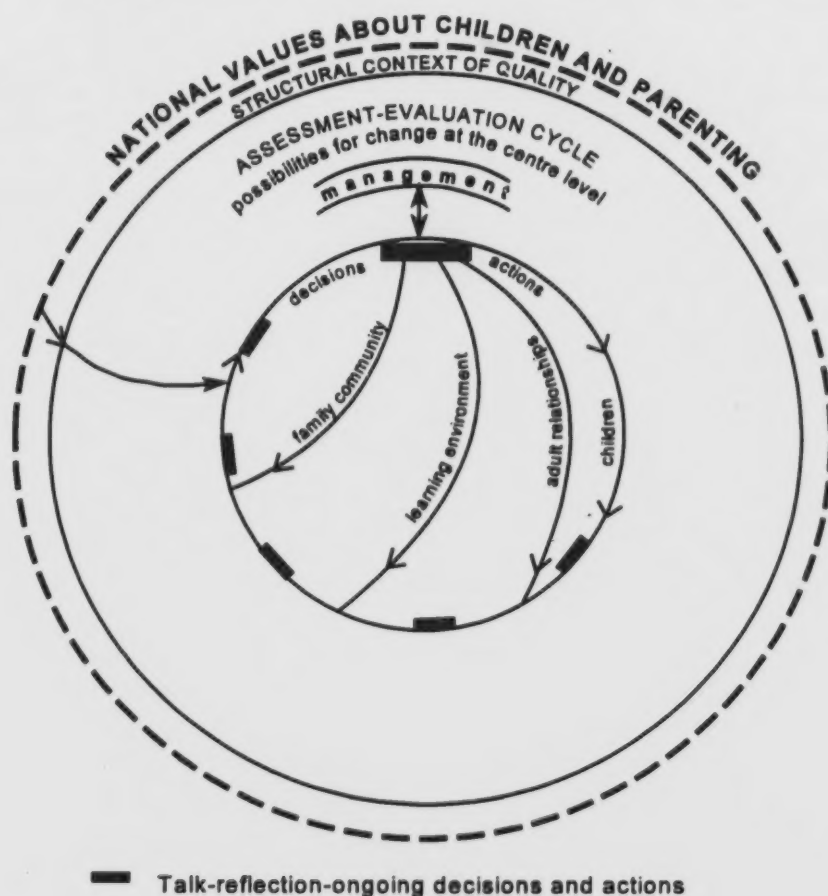
(a) What do these observations mean in relation to the role of adults as teachers, the environment, connections with family?

(b) Are there implications for management policies and processes?

At a Wellington College of Education workshop on 16 June 1997, "Training the Trainers for Working with Te Whāriki" on assessment with Margaret Carr, the researchers presented a further session on the project, sharing our thinking and the models so far developed. Several people attending had been to either the Wellington focus group interview or the advisory committee, and it was useful at this stage to have further comment and insight from key people in professional development roles with their organisations. The view expressed regarding model 1(b), was that "management" should be outside the immediate circle but connected into the circle because it was a process that would be different for each service and/or centre and that the immediate focus

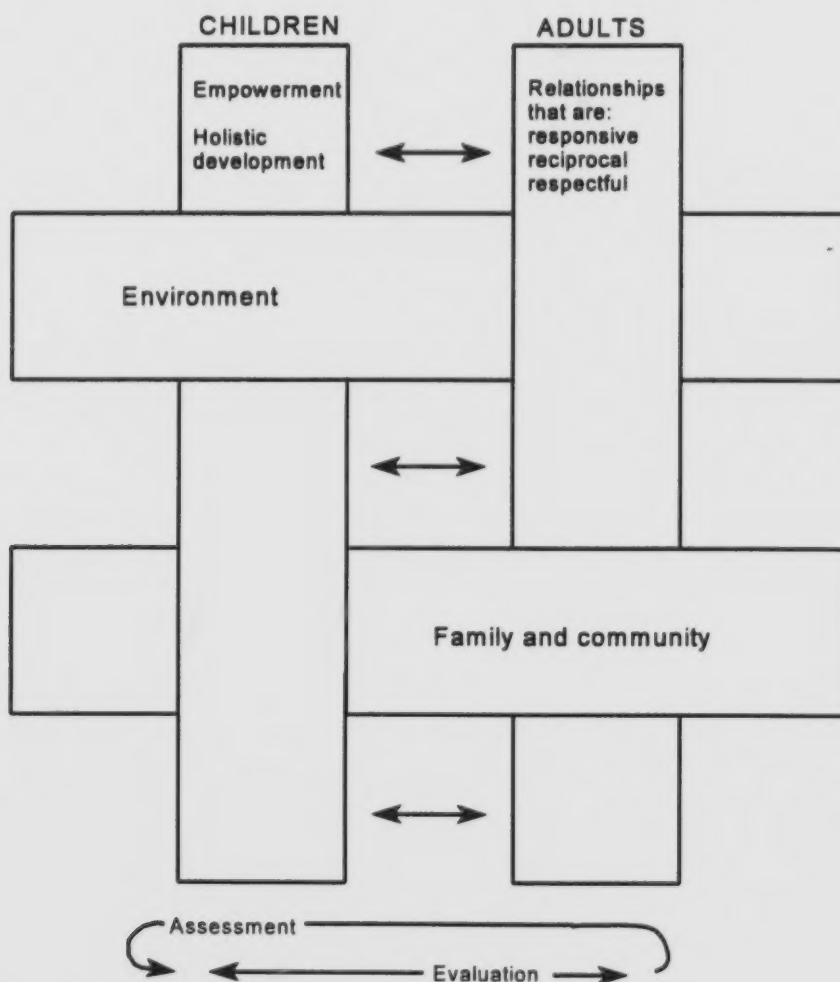
of evaluation was on the everyday programme. At some point, however, there was a context in which the implications for management policies and processes as they affected practice would need consideration. Model 1(c) was developed there.

Model 1 (c) Further Model for Formative Assessment and Evaluation Using the Principles and Framework of Te Whāriki



Discussion also led to a refinement of model 2(a), and to development of model 2(b) which provides a simpler view of the four key "components" of the evaluation process, collectively reflecting the four principles of Te Whāriki. The key things for the evaluation process were: to focus on the relationship between the components as observed in various contexts; and to focus on what can be changed or needs changing.

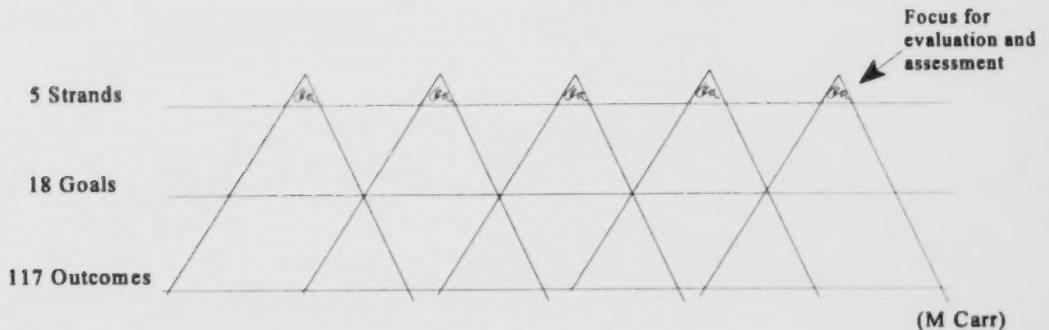
Model 2 (b)
A Holistic Framework for Observation/Evaluation → Relationships



Summary

At the end of the consultation process, we had made these decisions:

- We were given strong directions that we begin our framework guided by the principles of Te Whāriki.
- As in the assessment project, it became evident that we should look across the five strands. From the ethnographic study of centres we hoped to be able to identify some key "windows" that are rich for evaluation purposes in relation to each strand of Te Whāriki. To use a phrase of Margaret Carr's, "these are the tips of iceberg".



It is not realistic to evaluate (or assess) against all 26 goals or 117 outcomes for children as stated in Te Whāriki.

- The evaluatory framework should allow services or centres to select priority contexts and areas for self-evaluation.
- We had a clear sense that we could combine and connect the assessment and evaluation frameworks.

5. ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDIES

Phase two of the research focused on carrying out ethnographic studies of seven early childhood centres. The centres were identified by professional development specialists and representatives of the early childhood organisations as "effective practice centres" in regard to the implementation of Te Whāriki.

Participating Centres

The sample included centres which cater for different age groupings of children, as well as centres from different services with different philosophies. We judged that seven centres was the minimum number required to represent three services, all with different age groupings of children. The seven selected early childhood centres include:

- two kindergartens,
- two playcentres;
- three childcare centres (one community creche, one work-based childcare centre, and one all-day childcare centre).

The researchers acknowledge that there are other kinds of early childhood services, and support the need for parallel projects to address the distinctive nature of some of these services.

Ethnographic Fieldwork Procedures

A team of five researchers carried out week-long ethnographic studies of the seven early childhood centres. The observational method drew in part on ethnography (e.g., Fetterman, 1989). The proposed approach to observations was semi-structured with a more contracted time-frame than traditional ethnography, and a "multi-person team". These characteristics mean the method would be defined as "formalised" as opposed to "traditional" ethnography (Anderson, 1992, p. 155).

Brief written notes about the intended procedures were prepared as a guide for the ethnographers/researchers. In order to investigate what is going on in centres in terms of how the strands of Te Whāriki were being implemented effectively in the programme, the observations focused on:

- individual staff members,
- individual children,
- specific learning and teaching contexts.

During a preliminary interview with supervisory teachers/adults, the researchers negotiated which learning and teaching contexts to observe, and explored questions (based on Margaret Carr's "decision points in learning stories" (Carr, 1997c) about:

- The centre's plans for the week, with a focus on which children to observe, and where they might see a child or groups of children:
 - (1) finding something of interest
 - (2) being involved
 - (3) engaging with challenge and persisting when difficulties arise
 - (4) expressing a point of view
 - (5) taking responsibility.

The researchers also asked about possible activities or places on which they should focus their observations.

The observations were carried out for 4 days in each centre, throughout each day or session. The researchers spent some separate times focusing the observations on individual children, on adults, and on contexts suggested by the centres (*see* appendix D). Detailed field notes were recorded directly on to laptop computers wherever feasible.

Analyses of the Ethnographic Observations

The extensive field notes were analysed for patterns and categories, primarily by using NUD*IST, a computer program which stores information in tree-structured index systems. These systems have an unlimited number of categories and very complex index structures, and the researchers then search the data by indexes. NUD*IST is in more frequent use as a more rigorous tool by qualitative researchers to sort and categorise data and to systematically handle large amounts of data (Middleton, 1995).

In the first instance, the computer program NUD*IST was coded for each centre according to the categories set out in model 3, so that the relational contexts between these were explored, primarily within each centre, and also for overall patterns across centres. NUD*IST helped identify new relationships between existing categories, and also helps generate new categories. The analyses of the observations are related back to the five strands of Te Whāriki:

- Strand 1: Wellbeing—Mana Atua
- Strand 2: Belonging—Mana Whenua
- Strand 3: Contribution—Mana Tangata
- Strand 4: Communication—Mana Reo
- Strand 5: Exploration—Mana Aotūroa.

For further details of the NUD*IST "tree" of categories, see appendix E.

It should be noted, however, that this process was not preplanned and that it was not until the ethnographic study was well under way that the concept of the Teaching Story, for both individual adults and for the centre as a whole, emerged as an idea. Given that the focus of the Learning Story is on the individual child, it seemed an appropriate parallel strategy to focus on the adult as a teacher as the crucial facilitator in children's learning and development. The next chapter detailing the case studies outlines this process in more detail.

The researchers eventually prepared, for each centre, an overall summary of the observations across the strands, which we called a Centre Teaching Story. The construction of the Centre

Teaching Story began by developing Learning Stories for a small number of children, drawing on Margaret Carr's (1997c) framework. Next, Teaching Stories were constructed for individual adults, using the concept developed from the focus groups of "Responsive, Reciprocal, Respectful Relationships", and doing observations of specific learning and teaching contexts as defined by each centre. The overall Teaching Story for each centre was developed by scrutinising and appraising the observational transcripts of (a) adults; (b) children; and (c) specific learning/teaching contexts of the centre, checked against the NUD*IST categories (*see* appendix E).

Finally, as a further test of the observational data, the researchers used the summary criteria of the Centre Teaching Story as a framework for making sense of observations of specific learning and teaching contexts. We called these a Teaching Story in Action.

During a follow-up interview or group meeting, the researchers checked through some of the observational data with one or more teachers/adults who had responsibilities for running the centre. The return visits provided an opportunity to reflect on the analyses and to approve the "Centre Teaching Story" as reflective of the centre's philosophy and practice.

Summary

The researchers were by now aware that:

- we had collected data rich in examples of quality learning and teaching
- we had found the NUD*IST defined categories useful for making sense of the data
- we had an inkling of an idea that the process of analysis itself held the clues for a possible evaluative tool.

6. CASE STUDIES OF SEVEN "EFFECTIVE PRACTICE" CENTRES

Case studies were constructed of the centres. The purpose of these case studies was not to evaluate the seven "effective practice" centres. Our intention was to provide rich descriptive observations of children, adults, and learning and teaching contexts, which expressed the particular philosophy and focus of each centre. A related intention was that from these rich descriptions and the analysis of themes in them, a draft framework would be distilled, which could be relevant for others to use. It was important that any draft frameworks for evaluation that were developed could be seen as relevant and useful for each of the centres in the study.

It was during the construction of the case studies that the process of developing the Centre Teaching Story emerged from the analysis of the data, and the researchers shifted to a view that the Centre Teaching Story, constructed on the basis of Learning and Teaching Stories, could be a possible approach to evaluation. Such a Centre Teaching Story would show a progressional approach. This chapter describes this process and presents a summary of some of the case study data.

Introduction

The process began by developing Learning Stories for a small number of children as trialled by Margaret Carr (1998). The Learning Stories presented as part of the case studies in this report are based on the observations of individual children, excerpts of which are included, and then categorised using the Learning Story framework. The Learning Stories include children aged from 3 months up to 4 years 11 months, from different ethnic groups, and both girls and boys. These children were observed when engaged in a range of learning contexts in a small number of childcare centres, kindergartens, and playcentres. The Learning Stories were received extremely well by the adults in the centres who felt that the progressional framework gave a useful insight into each child's experiences at the centre, as well as an indication of how to further enhance children's learning.

Next, the researcher at each centre constructed Teaching Stories based in the main on their observations of individual adults. The adults observed include teachers in kindergartens and childcare centres and session co-ordinators and other parents in playcentres. Excerpts of these observations are also included. The Teaching Story for each adult was summarised using the broad strands of Te Whāriki.

In addition, and following on from the above, the researchers developed an overall Teaching Story for each centre, drawing on the NUD*IST analyses and checking their findings in consultation with centre participants. This process provided summary statements for each of the strands of Te Whāriki that expressed the core of each centre's philosophy and practice. As stated in the conclusion of the previous section, this approach to the analysis became clear as we looked more closely at the data that had been collected. We came to see that the Centre Teaching Story which is developed from observations could be conducted by practitioners in the course of their everyday work, by focusing on (a) adults; (b) children; (c) specific learning/teaching contexts. This gave us clues towards a possible approach to self-evaluation by centres. The Centre

Teaching Story from each centre (set out for each of the following case studies) also included categories which elaborated how the teaching role of adults was supported through, (a) the learning environment; (b) connections with family and community; and (c) by management policies and processes.

A summary of "Centre Teaching Stories" across the seven centres was later developed by the researchers. This was not intended to be used for comparing the centres against one another, but the purpose was to enable the researchers to see, through this summary data, Te Whāriki in action in different ways.

The next task was to see how useful and meaningful the particular Centre Teaching Stories were in interpreting the observational data. Each case study therefore includes a Teaching Story focused on observations of a specific learning/teaching context within the early childhood centre. This became the Centre's own "Teaching Stories in Action" which served to check the appropriateness and robustness of the overall Centre Teaching Stories. The contexts for observation were selected originally by the centre participants as being relevant to their own centre practices with regard to Te Whāriki. The specific contexts included in this section of the case studies are: food times, baking, arrival times and settling children in, several literacy-related "happenings", and music/ "a concert".

The case studies are of:

- "Selwyn" kindergarten
- "Te Moana" playcentre
- "Taniwha" playcentre
- "Events" community creche
- "Croissant" workplace childcare centre
- "Weka" kindergarten
- "Big Tree" all-day childcare centre.

In most instances, representatives from the centres chose their own pseudonyms. The seven case studies of "effective practice" centres provide a summary of the observational data that reveals Te Whāriki in action by using the Teaching Story as a tool and process for analysis. Chapter 7 will detail how this process becomes an approach for evaluation.

The summary case studies include excerpts of observational transcripts, presented within boxes and in small print. It should be noted that these observations at times incorporate additional comments or material based on the ethnographic interview with adults.

In the observational transcripts, a few small sections are highlighted in bold. These point out, for the reader's interest, responsive, reciprocal, respectful relationships in selected episodes of learning and teaching. These are labelled "*Example*".

Centre 1

"SELWYN"

Description of "Selwyn" Kindergarten

Selwyn kindergarten is situated in a moderately affluent community. There are 82 children on the roll and three staff who have worked together for some time. The kindergarten parents also pay for a teaching assistant who works on a regular part time basis. The building is of a typical kindergarten design. The outdoor areas have been recently redesigned to give children much easier access to all the grounds. The children are mainly European but several have English as a second language as their families are recent migrants from Europe. The children are 3- and 4-year-olds.

Learning and Teaching Stories

The Learning Story is of "Mary" a girl of 4 years and 3 months in the morning kindergarten session.

There are two Teaching Stories. One is of "J", the head teacher during arrival time. The second is of "T" at a table where children regularly make their breakfast. The latter was, however, analysed using the Centre Teaching Story categories developed for this centre.

This is a learning story based on observations:

“MARY’S” morning kindergarten Learning Story
On the move and being watchful

BELONGING Finding something of interest here	Mary appears contented at kindergarten and within the course of an hour shows interest in a number of activities and happenings although she is often in the first instance in the role of a watcher and observer. When she really wants to do something she achieves it by patient waiting (ie: getting a turn to stroke the rabbits). She does not push herself forward. She shows no discomfort at wandering around the kindergarten alone.
WELLBEING Being involved	Over the course of an hour Mary has been involved in a number of interactions and activities. Many of these are fleeting and when opportunity arises she moves on to something else and another group of children. Her involvement is often encouraged by what the other children are doing or by a teacher. She watches and copies.
EXPLORATION Engaging with challenge and persisting when difficulties arise	Mary tried out new things particularly in the climbing area but frequently moved with the flow or inclination to other things. Quiet persistence did manage eventually to get her a turn stroking the rabbit.
COMMUNICATION Expressing a point of view	Mary did not often converse with other children, but did when it was necessary. Playing alongside other children was Mary’s most frequent role.
CONTRIBUTION Taking responsibilities	Mary tended to take a watching role but not exclusively. On one occasion advises child on how to do a forward roll. Was managing to get herself dressed.

Observational Transcript Excerpts: “Mary”, aged 4 at a morning kindergarten session

10.30am

M goes into the cloakroom to get a plastic bag out of her bag. Takes some time to take an orange out, puts bag away then to bring orange in. Gives orange to teacher. Also brings in a little doll from her bag. Shows this to teacher who responds and tells her to put it in her bag. Meets another child in cloakroom. Hold her hand. Have a joke. The two children go to adjacent toilets. Leave doors ajar and talk to each other. Come out and wash hands together. Both dry hands. M goes into main room. Her friend calls her to come back and play in cloakroom but M goes outside.

Watches children in water play. Then goes to water trough. Plays alone tipping water from one bottle to another through a tube. Brings this to where the other children are on the deck. Holds large bottle while another talks. No conversation. Other child talks to M. M puts her bottle on the ground for another child to fill up.

Watches discussion by teachers and children about some hose problems in nearby sandpit. Returns to drip water through large bottle. These are double fizz bottles connected by a tube for water to drip from one to the other. Leaves bottles and gets jug fills these and takes to bench of containers. Four children along side. Plays alone at this. Puts two buckets on deck and fills these. Another child uses water from buckets. Fills up some test tubes and puts on a tray of cups. Talks to herself. One child alongside. Takes stirrer and stirs water in bowl.

Moves off to see teacher alongside another water trough. Teacher is putting on skin cream. Puts it over M's face. Tells M to tell mother to start putting a hat in her bag. M rubs cream into face. Stands alone sucking thumb. Walks alone around area. Sees a child who has been in the water who is taking her shoes off. M takes off one boot then puts it on again.

The two move to the climbing frame. Do not communicate. M walks across a plank, climbs backwards down ladder. Other child goes. M alone on plank looking at other children. Goes to another ladder. Slides along poles. Singing to herself surveying scene in kindergarten and one child who is climbing in another area. Keeps singing to herself. Goes to where other child is. They both sit at the top of reels on a plank briefly. Other child tries to get down. Talk to each other (cannot hear conversation). This is the same child with whom M was alongside in water. Walk along a tyre trail. They are alone here. M walks slowly in and out of tyres.

Other child finds a ring and puts it over M. M and friend go around behind kindergarten. They go around back with a lot of rings. One around M. Friend pulls her along right around the back of the kindergarten.

Stop at a wooden house structure near carpentry. M goes inside and sits. Other child brings some wood into house. M takes the wood and places around house frame. Only minimal conversation. Other child places hoop over M who agrees. M takes little notice and sits alone as other child wanders. Returns with a saw to saw house. M watches, sitting in her hoops. Watches other child with tools.

M comes out of house and wanders alone back round kindergarten. Other child goes off alone. Then runs to catch her up. M points out a helicopter hovering in the sky. They are again the only children in this part of the kindergarten.

Return towards carpentry. Another child joins. New child and other child talk about saw. M stands on outer and wanders around the outside of house. Goes back into view of rest of kindergarten leaving other two children playing. Skips off alone to back of kindergarten. Walks around, sits alone and looks into sky at helicopter. Jumps off deck still looking up at helicopter. Two boys appear. M looks on. Points out the helicopter to them. They do not take any notice.

Goes all the way around and back into the sandpit. Sits near another girl. They dig together and converse quietly. Puts sand on other child's legs. Child invites M to go to another hole where she has been digging. She goes and watches. "M would you like me to do that for you?"

Children run off to climbing area. M "Abby is my friend". Other child. "You are my friend". In a group, girls move through tyre trail again. Other girls go faster and M looks on at what they do. All look up at helicopter. Other girls go around again and catch M up who then moves on. Turns into a game of being in or out. M agrees. "If you step on the grass you are out".

Teacher appears on fringe of this group. Crouches and watches. Children say, "You have to have shoes off to join in". M goes over to teacher. J suggests she may want to take her shoes and tights off. Teacher helps her do this. M goes off around tyre trail again. Occasionally looks at child behind and makes comments (unheard). Child in front lies down on rocking board. M waits when she comes to rocking board rock standing up.

Teacher leaves and gets a tunnel for the circuit. Lots of children dive towards it. M watches on. M sits on teacher's knee briefly. Teacher shows another child how to do a roly poly. M watches on then does one. Teacher congratulates her. M jumps alone very much an observer of what is happening. Goes around tyres again as other children debate and argue about tunnel. As other children leave tunnel, M goes up and says she is going to have a go. Teacher sees her coming and encourages her. "Come and do a forward roll. Good girl". M waits on mat talking to teacher. Another child does a roll. M says "A you have to do it a bit straight". Teacher: "Why does she have to do it straight M". "Because she did a bent one." says M.

M pulls her arm up her sleeve and waves it at teacher. "It looks as if you have no arm". M. "I have a sloppy arm". M wants to take her dress off. Teacher says "I think you need to keep it on. It is not really summer yet without the sun. I know you have been sick. Do you want some help putting your tights and shoes on. Do you know which way your tights go on. There are two ways." M shows her the way. J "good girl" and helps to dress her. M pulls up tights herself, then starts to put her shoes on. M remembers her floppy arms again. Another child copies this. All children have now gone. M laughs at her arms and now removes her dress and makes her skivvy into a floppy arm.

Is alone on mat watching several other new children come to the area. Takes off skivvy and is in her vest. Then tries to put on dress. Gets it inside out. Corrects that. M. leaves with her dress on carrying her skivvy.

These are the observational records on which Mary's learning story is based.

Example

T comes to tell M and other child that they may like to go inside and look at rabbits.

Leaves to go inside where children are gathering on the mat to look at the rabbits. Some are tidying up blocks to make space. Sits silently, still and lone and watches. As baby rabbits are shown, children are eager to see. M gets left in the outer circle as children squeeze through. Eventually crawls around to get a better position. Stays on teacher's knee. Sits back as rabbits are taken around just observing. Sitting very still. T sits M on mat as she goes to help children see rabbit which is being fed. M stands and then comes around kneels near a child who has the big rabbit, watches one. Puts her hands out to have a hold. A number of children ask for a hold. T says they can have a pat. Lots of children would like to. T says have to sit on bottom. M loses her place and goes well down the line to wait.

T gets a fright as rabbit licks her arm. Children and M laugh at this. Another T asks M if she would like to come and look at the baby being fed. Makes space for her. M goes to look. Stands with finger in her mouth. M goes back to her original place to wait for a turn for a hold of the bigger rabbit. Sits silent. Teacher decides rabbit has had enough. Each child allowed to come and have a stroke. M comes around to take a position near teacher who does not see her. T selects children from further away. T sees M and smiles at her. M smiles waiting. Several children selected. T asks M if she wants to stroke. Creeps up on teacher's knee and strokes bunny. It is nice and soft. T tells M that she is sitting on her foot and it is hurting. M shifts and cuddles up.

M. asks "What is the collar". T. "I think it is a flea collar". M smiles and she touches rabbit. Stays in the same position.

T says it is tidy up time. Children are moving off. M remains close and continues to stroke. Teacher talks about going to the toilet. M laughs T gets up to leave. M stands by. Talks about sleep. M says she needs a lot of sleep. T cuddles M. Three girls gather for conversation. M "I slept to 3 o'clock" T. "Right let us do some tidying up". M goes over to look at rabbits in box. Stands and looks.

11.30am

This is a Teaching Story developed from observations:

Adult J's Teaching Story

Early one morning as the children arrive

BELONGING	J. is focusing on ensuring that each parent and child is given a special time as they arrive. Their needs are varied and J responds to each differently. There are many conversational connections made between home and kindergarten and J attempts to use "home" connections as a lead in to something the child might like to explore or do in the kindergarten. At this time the parents are given "equal" attention with the children. Some of this attention relates to the children but sometimes the focus is specific to the adult.
WELLBEING	The children's main needs at this early time are being made to feel welcome, and for J to acknowledge what they want to show or tell is interesting and relevant. J allows time for children to feel settled and looks for ways to facilitate parents leaving their child and then for the child to feel that they can move beyond J. The pattern is different for every child. For one or two children this is a longer process. But in time J settles all the children. Many however have confidently said hello and settled themselves into some play activity. J responds promptly to requests from children although not necessarily solving the "problem" herself.
EXPLORATION	As the children settle J moves first to the dough table where she plays with dough herself to encourage one child in particular that this is a possible place to play. From this observation it is clear that children will not move towards "exploratory" activities until they have a sense of wellbeing and belonging. In the collage area J follows children's interests and agenda to support, facilitate, and extend their ideas. Children were encouraged to keep thinking about what they were doing and the children were staying on the task for a period of time. The children's needs were very different and it was a matter of continually connecting with what a child had said or done previously—even on another day. J sometimes anticipates what a child might need to prevent frustration.
COMMUNICATION	Ongoing verbal communication with individual children and parents. Encouraging children to respond to welcomes. Later moves into group situation and verbal communication encompasses several children. Notices body language of children and responds to many non-verbal cues during settling in time.
CONTRIBUTION	Facilitating goodbyes between children and parents. Enabling children to feel they can choose what they might want to do themselves. Encouraging children to assist others or note what others are doing.

Observational Transcript Excerpt: Adult "J" Head Teacher at arrival time during a morning kindergarten session.

9am

J is sitting on floor greeting children and parents as they arrive. One child arrives with a beautiful scarf. J asks to feel it and then admires child's glitter shoes. Mother says that she has given up and she can wear what she wants. J responds that is probably the best way. Child moves off.

Example

Parent comes in who is on the committee and talks about an order to be dealt with. J then remarks to the child of this mother who comes in with a box, "What have you brought? Is empty it or is there something in it?" Child acknowledges response with eyes but moves on to other children with box.

Previous to children arriving J has built an exotic fairy land building with blocks in the middle of the floor close to where she is sitting. A number of children are attracted to the area and play around it. She occasionally observes and comments on what they are doing.

One child arrives for a cuddle on J's lap and then another child comes and stands in front of J. J says, "I wonder if I can cuddle two". J cuddles both. One child leaves and others take her place.

A parent comes in and J asks, "Now have you managed to translate the new Maori phrase on the notice board as they came in". Parent goes back to look and there is a conversation about what it means.

Another child sidles up to sit on J's knee. Two parents stand nearby and talk. J joins conversation. One mother has lost something. J tells her where to look. Child who had main place on J's knee is still there. J talks to child about a helicopter that had been hovering up hill yesterday. (The children had been outside watching it.) J asks what it was doing up at their place. Strokes child's face briefly. Child says that the helicopter was moving their car which had broken down! J tells another teacher that this is why helicopter was there. The child looks pleased that her "story" was believed!

Child comes for help with some paint. J tells him how to sort it and points out the area they need to go to.

Child comes in and stays around morning tea table. J asks if she has had breakfast that morning. Child nods but continues to look at the breakfast set out. J says she can help herself to anything if she is hungry.

J settles child who had been on knee for some time at the nearby leggo table. Child who had appeared hungry goes there too. J sits back in background more. Waves at another child arriving and then greets M a child who has special needs and who comes with a minder. J goes to cloak room to help him sort out his bag.

Another family arrive with an ex-kindergarten child. J greets him with a cuddle and says, "It can't be my little F". F happy to receive attention and J invites his sister to show him around the kindergarten to see what has changed. F is sick off school today. Mother arrives with child who had been on a school visit the day before. J and mother discuss how this was.

Another child comes who had hurt his eye. Talk with mother about scratch. It happened when he was playing rugby. J cuddles him. He is quiet while she talks to mother with toddler. Another child takes off the toddler's hat. J asks the child to give toddler back his hat—facilitates this. Child returns hat. J still remains crouched near door on floor with one child on knee. She talks with parent and toddler. Toddler acknowledges J and shows familiarity with her.

J stands and holds child's hand who had been on her knee. Moves to table near door still holding child's hand but where children are playing with magnetic blocks. Another child comes for a cuddle on J's knee. Child cuddles in close. J says to child, "Give mummy a cuddle before she goes". They go into cloakroom. J talks with several parents and children there. Walks back in, crouches on floor near dough table still carrying child who has said good bye to parents. Talks with a child who is happily playing with dough and her mother then leaves. J invites child on knee to join dough table. She does. Another parent comes up to talk with J. J kneels alongside the child she has settled at the dough. Surveys kindergarten and then returns to child. Kneels alongside child but encouraging child to take the lead in making something with dough.

Parent asks J for some information regarding another child. Child shows J what she has been making in the dough. J helps her do some fine work on the dough. Includes two more children in conversation. Helps shape an animal face with dough. Greets a child who arrives with some food. Asks if it is for the children or the teachers. Child says the teachers. Mother comes in. J "oh neat". Focuses again on child with dough. Parent arrives with bread. "Shall I give it to P" J acknowledges and agrees. Returns to focus on what child is making with dough.

Another child arrives. "Hallo" J asks to see what he has. Glasses in a case. "Can I see what they look like when you put them on? Do you need sun glasses today? No. It is not sunny." Mother suggests to child that he puts them in his bag. Child talks to J. about having fish and chips last night and that he might have it again tonight. Child is going to Taupo. J talks about McDonalds in Taupo and that it is in an aeroplane. Two other children join the conversation. J talks about all the things you can do in Taupo. Talks with mother about all the attractions for children in Taupo. Tells mother about her own experiences of having children there. Talks about swimming at night time and wearing pyjamas home from pool. "You could look on the map and see where Lake Taupo is." J tells child who is sitting on J's knee. Tell child that "Lake Taupo was once a volcano—one of the biggest in the world". J talks while playing with dough and occasionally links in with child who is still playing in dough. Parent encourages child to take glasses to cloakroom. Mother goes and J takes child with his glasses towards collage area.

These are observational records of "arrival time" at the kindergarten. Adult J's Teaching Story is based on these observations.

J settles child into doing some painting on a small piece of paper. Child who had been doing dough comes too keeping close to J. J writes a notice for her dough model. "K's bird" and places it on a table.

Another mother arrives. She had brought rabbits to show children yesterday. Mother tells J that they are late because C had slept in 9 o'clock and he needed to sleep. A discussion about cats and J suggests he may like to make a cat. C moves off to look at something else. D returns to show J a box.

J sees M and signs to him if he wants scissors. She looks and finds his special scissors. Congratulates M when he cuts with them.

Then fixes a plug of toaster where children are making breakfast. Children had been unable to get the toaster working. This works.

Finds magazine pictures for child she has talks about cats with. Discussion about meerkats at Wellington zoo. Mother is alongside and part of this discussion.

Child has been cutting quantities of collage into a box which he wants to take home. J tells him he can have some in his special box but not all the boxes. J takes box back to collage stores and unpacks it back. Talks with child who has got his "special box" from locker that is the one he can take some collage home in.

J talks to TA about some skills that M has re: holding pens.

Child (D) still wants to take things home. Wants ball of wool. J says he could cut a bit off and take a little bit.

J free from children briefly and does a quick tidy of collage table. Sees D again scavenging from the collage and says, "Good boy you are taking just a little bit. Do you want to put your name on your box". D goes to get his velcroed name off wall. Puts name back and doesn't want to write name on. "Do you want to put your special box in your locker or where shall I put it." asks J. D gets large blue container and proceeds to sellotape his special box into it. J facilitates and observes. Returns to talk with parents and child (who had been interested in cats). Social talk with parent. J watches and chats to child sticking containers. A brief conversation with another child at collage table. "What are these bits for? Why do you cut it like that?" Child tips a bit of paint into box. J questions him "What will happen when you put the box on top?"

Admires a blackboard drawing nearby children are doing. Talks with C who has a "diamond" in a box. Talks about what is inside glass. A pearl. J talks about her pearl necklace. Two children talk about this. J says she will bring her pearl necklace tomorrow. "Do you know how they grow oysters? They are very precious". J intervenes gently to say that the "diamond" is special and C cannot give it away. C's grandmother gave it to her. "Do you want to put it somewhere special." C says "I could bring mummy's pearls to Kindergarten". "No No you cannot do that they're too precious, but perhaps when M mother helps she could wear her pearls." A group of girls gather around glass. J tells them that she will try and remember her pearls tomorrow.

C still completing box model. J holds it for him. Another child offers to give him some sellotape. On top of model child puts the glasses case he originally brought in.

Talks with mother about the rabbits while she helps D with his model. C comes and asks for help with something she cannot find. Another child finishes his cats cut-out picture. Collage complete. "Do you want to show it to A" (the other teacher).

Talks with mother while watching D do more work on his model. All children around busy. "You have used everything on that box. Sellotape, paint and pens".

Rubs nearby child's back and says what good work she is doing. Does a little tidying. Three children at collage table. J still watches D's work closely. A phone call. Talks with other T about M may need pants changing. Offers to do this but other T says she will.

J goes into kitchen and D still continues with model.

Returns to show a child how she could write her name on the parcel she has been making. Child gets her name but says she doesn't know how to do it. J says you watch and see how B does it. Child takes pen and completes it and returns velcroed name to wall.

Helps another child find a box in box pile. Returns to D who is still working on model. Sorts some tangled string. Notes how D has a container to catch paint drips as he paints. "Note the way it drips in different directions", she says to other children.

Talks to S who asks J to look after a teddy while she gets some paper. Suggests that D may need to get a cloth to wipe things up. Sorts string. Helps child to get things she needs. A phone call. Leaves children to go into storeroom. Brings out some bottles for two girls. Continues talking on mobile. It is an inquiry about a new child. J discusses entry procedures. Takes two girls into storeroom to show where the bottles are.

Talks with other T about D's model which incorporates his special box. Relates how his mother doesn't want him to bring any more boxes home. Begins a tidy up of area. D shows J his model. "Well done D". Then sees another box he wants to add.

Talks to M about how she could help her do something. I will get you some really sharp scissors that will help you to cut.

Another child approaches "I have a potion". J replies "What sort of potion. How do you make it?" "It is magic and I made it at home". "Do you know what the ingredients were?" M has filled a bottle up with paints. Helps M to find name. M asks about another name. J talks about different children's names on board. D wants J to write his name on paint container. J says "It won't work on there. What we could do is to get a label and write it on the outside". D and J go into cupboard. J writes "D". Child asks if she can cut something. "Yes H but you could do it with these. If these scissors don't work then H will get you the sharp ones". D gives J pencil to write something. J "What words would you like me write?" Writes words on boxes.

Child. "Here is my potion". Bottle has treasures from collage in it and water liquid. Child finds more treasures.

10 am

Example

Selwyn Kindergarten's "centre teaching stories", which are based on the overall observations and were checked against the NUD*IST analyses, follow in tabulated form.

**“Selwyn” Kindergarten
Centre Teaching Stories**

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through “responsive, reciprocal, respectful” adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
BELONGING	Knows and understands children’s interests, needs, and strengths The teachers spend considerable time with individual children getting to know them. This knowledge is utilised to try and make the curriculum meaningful to the everyday lives and interests of individual children as far as is possible in a kindergarten with a roll of 80. This is particularly evident as children arrive each day. The emphasis is on the children as a priority before the possible “activities” of the day.	There are places where children can display or store the things they have made. Each child can find something of themselves in the environment (files, photos, names, pegs). Children know where everything is in the environment, and every item no matter how small has a place. Children have access to everything in the environment. Packing up rituals are complex as teachers seek to engage all children in preparing the environment for the next session and knowing where the place is for everything.	Teachers spend extended time with parents at arrivals and departures which not only builds up a relationship with the families but provides knowledge about the family and the child that is incorporated into the programme for the child in many different ways.	
WELLBEING	Addresses children’s needs with caring concern The teachers spend time developing emotional relationships with children and are mindful and perceptive of changes in mood or wellbeing. This helps build relationships that children can trust. The children seek and are given physical contact. Attention is paid to physical comfort.	The environment has been designed to allow indoor and outdoor spaces where children can be alone and quiet. Eating and washing facilities are designed to allow child self-sufficiency.	Close connections with families provide more indepth knowledge for staff towards meeting children’s needs appropriately. Endeavours are made to ensure joint strategies towards dealing with particular situations. Information about children at the kindergarten is continually related back to parents.	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
EXPLORATION	Expands children's horizons by creating challenges and encouraging creativity Teachers spend extended time with individual children, often in a facilitating supportive role, posing problems, inviting ideas, and inviting interest from other children. Teachers encourage children's creativity with a curriculum that is not driven by adult planned activities, but where teachers support and extend the ideas of children. Teachers allow children to take risks and will often stand back from situations as a "non interfering although interested observer".	The environment is designed to allow maximum impact upon it on a daily basis by the children of that particular session, at the end of which it returns to its more neutral state. Interest is however sometimes invited, by teachers setting out, for example, a few blocks in a new way. The equipment and resources are plentiful. Indoor and outdoors are both fully utilised as opportunities for exploration.	Files, photos, and observations on children are made available to parents which note new skills and endeavours. Parents are encouraged to see the broad child-centred approach to the domain of exploration as an important foundation for learning.	
COMMUNICATION	Invites communication and expression of children's feelings Teachers encourage children to verbalise their ideas and feelings particularly in relation to communicating needs and feelings to other children and adults. Children are frequently invited to express opinions and ideas.	There is an extensive library which is frequently used as a resource for teacher-child communication. Children provided with opportunities to see print and writing as useful tools for communication.	Teachers communicate with as many parents as possible at arrival-departure times. Comment and opinion is invited on everyday matters, programme policies, and politics.	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
CONTRIBUTION	Supports children's self-help and co-operative skills The teachers actively encourage independence which in turn releases teacher time to spend with individual children. A key to this independence is the encouragement of other children to "peer tutor". Teacher effort and time is put into children to enable them to acquire new skills but these skills in turn increase their independence and their self-esteem.	The environment changes very little even on a yearly basis. The philosophy of the teachers is that any activity which is set out is set out on a long-term basis and must be one that the children can manage themselves. Everything is accessible including such things as food and clothes.	These children often come from homes where much is done for them and the kindergarten is used to demonstrate the potential of children's independence and abilities towards taking responsibility for themselves and others.	

Finally for Selwyn, a "Teaching Story in Action" was prepared, based on observations in the context of food preparation/breakfast. The purpose of any Teaching Story in Action was to check the appropriateness and robustness of the centre's overall Teaching Story. The key elements of the "Centre Teaching Stories" are presented in bold in the first column, under each Strand of Te Whāriki. Note, however that a Teaching Story in Action need not cover all strands.

Teaching Story in Action Breakfast at Kindergarten

BELONGING Knows and understands children's interests, needs, and strengths	
WELLBEING Addresses children's needs with caring concern	Teacher anticipated difficulties children might have with the technology and responded immediately to any children who approached often with needs not associated with breakfast. The child who was possibly unwell was cuddled and given sympathy. This was building trust in children.
EXPLORATION Expands children's horizons by creating challenges and encouraging creativity	The opportunity to make their own breakfast was something most of the children did not experience at home. There was opportunity for children to make real choices about what they wanted to make and how to prepare it. All the discussions about food, flowers, and seeds etc., were adding to the children's knowledge base.
COMMUNICATION Invites communication and expression of children's feelings	The meal time was an opportunity for wide-ranging talk, which in this situation was often led by the teacher but which invited the response and opinion from children.
CONTRIBUTION Supports children's self-help and co-operative skills	Children are encouraged to become self-sufficient in managing the technology of the breakfast table ie, toaster, knives, jars, and jugs, as well as the social etiquette of eating together and helping each other. There were certain rules associated with making breakfast that children were introduced to.

Observational excerpts of transcript of adult "B", a teacher at morning kindergarten at a table where children are making their own breakfast.

A breakfast table has been set up where children make their own breakfast with toast, muesli, cereal, fruits, and drinks. This is a regular happening. A teacher is not always or usually present although teachers do keep "an eye" on the table and give assistance where necessary.

T is sitting at the table keeping a watching eye on this. Helping children to find the right implements, to spread and to cut. Helps cut up some apple. Child spreads a lot of vegemite. T suggests that it is very thick and that will make a very strong taste. Talks about the huge container of marmite. Says that they buy it in a very big one and that then they put it in smaller one.

"We cannot put it on the table because it is made of glass. It is also too heavy for you. Would you like me to scoop some from this container? You get me a spoon. Watch it slithering off the spoon. Glass weighs more than plastic does. If someone dropped it, it might break. We wouldn't be able to use marmite. It might have glass in it. I wonder where the washing up container is."

Asks child if she wants some more fruit cut. Greets another child. "Are you back for seconds? We are running out of fruit. I hope the afternoon children remember to bring some."

Sink is full of water and children do their dishes. Suggests that child will need to wash hands.

"Oranges are good for you. They have vitamin C. Sometimes we take tablets which have vitamins". Shows child where to put uneaten food and skins into rubbish tin. Helps child with a lid of jar that has cracker biscuits. Teacher talks about healthy fruits. "Your body needs all different types of food to help it to work properly".

Flower falls into fruit bowl. T takes it out but then talks about flowers. "There are some flowers you can eat". Child mentions cauliflower. "It is a vegetable", replies T. Shows a daphne flower and compares it to what a cauliflower looks like. T says she will bring a cauliflower along. Children admire the daffodils in vase. Child talks about the stick of the flower. T tells them that this is the stem. Reminds children about growing seeds. Children start washing dishes. Three remain at table.

"Lemons and oranges are from the same family. They are from the citrus family". Child says they taste different. More children gather. A popular table. T talks about what would happen if they planted seeds from fruit. Apple seeds. Children go to nature area and find an acorn seed. Teacher says these are very hard to grow. Another child approaches to show a model. Teacher puts it up on safe shelf. One child still interested in seeds. Look at seeds growing on window ledge. Several children gather who had been in the dressing ups. Child comes and asks for help about food.

T and two children examine seeds. Plant an apple seed with them and suggests that they make a sign to tell them that they are apples, as the other seeds are sunflowers. Goes to other end of kindergarten and helps child make a label. All around other children playing in groups in a wide range of activities, e.g., children work tape machine themselves and accompany music.

"Shall we check when the plants were last watered?" Child leaves. T does a little tidying in family area. Helps a child clean her clothes. Admires her sweatshirt. As T tidies up some medical gear, talks to a child about her friend who went to the doctor with asthma.

A child brings up a picture. Cuddles her and admires the picture. "You feel a bit hot. How do you feel? Are you a bit sick". Child says her tummy is. Suggests child take picture and put into file. Goes to cloakroom to see where it is. This is where music is. Tells child this is where she can put special things. Talks again about child's tummy—cuddling her. "Shall we see where M is? I wonder where she is. I can see H. but not M. Who else can we see? There she is on the floor. Where shall we put your scarf? It might get stood on otherwise."

Returns to child at food table. "You need to sit on a chair not the table. Takes child to other end of kindergarten. Children continue preparing, eating and washing up at breakfast table.

These are observational records focused on the context of "Breakfast".

Example

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Centre 2

"TE MOANA"

Description of "Te Moana" Playcentre

"Te Moana" is a playcentre sited in a converted house with spacious grounds and a large rear outdoor area. The community served by the playcentre is described as mainly middle class/mixed; and to some extent ethnically mixed. The adults responsible for each session include a small team with one co-ordinator. The playcentre is managed by a team of parents.

This is "a larger playcentre than most", with seven sessions per week (five morning and two afternoon sessions). The roll includes from 16 to 21 children at each session, with an average group size of around 21 if all children attend. At least five to seven parents are on the roster for each session. The usual ratio of adults to children is one to three.

Learning and Teaching Stories

Te Moana playcentre caters for children aged from birth to school age and their families. Two learning stories were constructed from the observational records and analyses: one focuses on "Tahu" a boy aged 4 years, and the other on a girl "Lana" aged 3 months. The teaching story is derived from the analyses of observations of "B", a co-ordinating adult at the centre, in a range of learning and teaching contexts during a morning playcentre session.

The week Tahu was observed, he was aged 4 years 4 months. He is described as Maori and Pakeha/part Maori. This is a Learning Story for Tahu:

Tahu's Learning Story

Digging, Collage, and Including Others

BELONGING Finding something of interest here	Tahu shows a strong interest in both the outdoor and indoor happenings and contexts. He concentrates on outdoor sandpit and camping contexts, rapidly becoming involved. He also participates without hesitation in group story reading, and at the playdough and collage tables.
WELLBEING Being involved	In the contexts observed, Tahu participates actively. He joins in conversations with adults and children. (Despite his having been identified by the adults at this centre as one of the "less outgoing" children.)
EXPLORATION Engaging with challenge and persisting when difficulties arise	Tahu persists, for longer than the other children, with digging in the earth at a site where a fireside happening took place. (This part of the outdoor environment has been left uncultivated to allow for exploration and pretend play.)
COMMUNICATION Expressing a point of view	Tahu smiles and participates in conversations, and in singing activities where he joins in the English and Maori words. He converses with adults, peers, and younger children while absorbed in play. He also works silently at times, observes others, then responds reciprocally.
CONTRIBUTION Taking responsibility	Both at the collage table and at the playdough table, Tahu appears to take responsibility for involving other children. At the playdough table, he does this by offering a younger child flour from "my shop", describing what he is making, then sharing out his "pancakes".

Observational Transcript Excerpts: tahu aged 4 years 4 months at a morning playcentre session.

9.10am Tahu is digging in the sandpit alongside a small group of children. An adult, the team leader, arrives outside with a tent. The children move from the sandpit to the grass area behind. Tahu becomes involved in the camping activity. He observes the tent. The tent is erected by the adult assisted by the group of children. The child smiles as the tent is erected, and eagerly enters with other children. He stays inside the tent, smiling at other children as they enter. Then he moves outside the tent and talks through the window to peers inside. The adult starts a camping song, the children join in, and Tahu then follows the adult with group of children. The adult and a group of children run to fetch buckets of water. Tahu participates actively. He offers to fetch water with his peers, then visits the sandpit on the way to the water. The children are gathered at site of intended fire. Tahu talks with other 4-year-old children about camping. An adult (the team leader) goes to get a shovel. Tahu comments: "A shovel?" Tahu watches the adults dig a hole. Adult: "Now you all know we're going to put a fire here". Tahu watches this adult, then looks around at peers, then takes hold of some paper for the fire to put in the hole. He bends down, adds paper to the fire, while the adult explains how to build the fire, commenting on children's help.

Tahu exclaims "That's starting to go black", pointing to the wood at the edge of the fire. An adult explains that that is carbon and discusses charcoal. Tahu listens to the explanation and watches the embers closely. Then he joins in the next verse of the song, Ba Ba Black Sheep. The adult/team leader includes a girl in the next verse, and Tahu sings the words of next verse about little girl who lives down the lane.

These are excerpts from the observational records on which Tahu's learning story is based.

Example

Tahu continues to observe the fire. Next he joins in a song about little ducks. He joins in the whole song and contributes more loudly to the "quack, quack". He continues singing the next song, in which the Maori words are used for the names of the colours and the duck. Tahu moves closer to his mother, still watching fire and singing the words kowhai raki raki. **An adult asks another child not to throw rocks into the fire. Tahu continues to listen to the adult, then he calls "It's going out". The adults explain that it is still hot and they will get more water to put it out. "Where's my bucket?" he asks. An adult replies "Tahu you can use that one, that one here". Tahu takes the bucket "I've got a little bit of water", he says. An adult agrees. Tahu bends down and together with his peers, pours water on the extinguished fire. He holds out his bucket for refilling by an adult, who asks "Do you want to tip that in?" Tahu tips in the water, then hands the bucket back to an adult. An adult talks to children about morning tea, and Tahu walks inside with a peer, talking about the fire and the tent.**

Example

Tahu is at a table with a group of two other children, girls aged 3 to 4 years. Three children are at the collage table, no adult is there, but one adult who is at an adjacent dough table is watching them. Tahu is cutting cord for collage. He sticks more materials on to the collage, then looks into the containers. Tahu says, "and there's buttons and scissors in here but they're not allowed to be there" —he initiates matching and sorting collage materials and the two other children join him in this activity. He asks one of the girls "Can I please put this (cloth) over your button. I need to cut this don't I?" The other child agrees to both his questions. They have a conversation about lollies and icecream. Tahu says he has "52 packets, no 150 (packets of icecream). We have more than you, if you have 50 we have 152." A girl replies "Even more than these buttons and hooks and scissors?" Tahu then suggests "Let's see how much scissors and sort the buttons and scissors". He offers a third child, who has not been part of the conversation to date, a special button "Do you want a very special painted button, this special button?" This draws the third child into the activity. Tahu then says to the other girl "I gave this yellow one to her and she loves these yellow buttons, but you don't like white ones". (He appears to have taken responsibility for involving the third child in the activity.) "Do you want this tiny one?" he asks her. After sorting the buttons, and with some corners of the collage completed, all three children go outside together.

These are excerpts from the observational records on which Tahu's learning story is based.

11.30am Tahu is back at the dough table with S (a younger boy) and his mother "Hey if you like S, would you like some flour on it? I've got some flour at my shop" (he offers the younger child some flour). "This one is very long" (he adds, rolling out the dough). They continue rolling dough. Tahu keeps talking to the younger boy. Tahu continues rolling dough with his left hand, talking about making pancakes. He offers a pancake to the adult who responds "Yes please". Tahu moves into a discussion with the adult about size and shape, long and thin. He says "Here you go here's a pancake with lemon on it", and then continues to make dough pancakes for the adult and the younger child who remain at the dough table.

12.20pm The session is over and it's evaluation time. The four adults who led the session are seated at a table, evaluating the session, checking out with one another what individual children were doing during the session, for example: whether one child had any difficulties with peers, whether another girl joined in at the sandpit, who played with the dough, different children's level of involvement, how certain children persisted with activities. Next they evaluate the activities/contexts. One adult comments that Tahu dug the deepest hole and stayed longest at the outdoor activities. (Evaluation of environment and Tahu): The team leader comments that the tent activity was fun, but the children would have liked a tent door that opened and closed. There had been lots of sand play, and water play. It had been interesting trying to get a level of respect for other children—by explaining that some didn't want to get splattered. They comment that there had been lots of big muscle activity and digging. It had worked well having the outdoor area designed with the patch at the back kept for digging (where Tahu persisted the longest). This was also used for the fire this session. They emphasised singing and introducing more Maori words into the songs.

In addition, a learning story was constructed for Lana, an infant observed at the age of 3 months and 1 week. The researcher developed this learning story to explore the applicability of the learning story approach to the youngest infants attending the centre. This is Lana's Learning Story:

Lana's (Girl Aged 3 Months) Learning Story Contented and Part of the Action

BELONGING Finding something of interest here	Lana initiates contact. Several adults and older children respond to Lana's vocalisations, and involve her in group activities.
WELLBEING Being involved	Lana is well and contented throughout the session (evident both in the observer's records and in the adults' comments at their evaluation meeting). There is a lack of crying. Adults respond as soon as she whimpers, on several occasions by picking her up and holding her, and involving her e.g. at the playdough table.
EXPLORATION Engaging with challenge and persisting when difficulties arise	Lana appears to find meaningful play when lying on the floor, her eyes on a rattle, and watching older children involved in problem solving.
COMMUNICATION Expressing a point of view	Lana vocalises alongside older children. She interacts with responsive, reciprocal adults.
CONTRIBUTION Taking responsibility	Lana takes a watching role. She articulates her choice of involvement, by vocalising "ah" or whimpering.

Observational Transcript Excerpts: Lana. Girl aged 3 months at morning playcentre session.

9 am Lana arrives at the centre in a pram pushed by mother, with her older brother (2 years). She lies in pram by playdough table. Lana cries slightly. She is picked up and held by her mother, who talks about the session and talks and smiles at her. Other adults and children leave playdough area. Her mother settles Lana back in the pram.

9.10am Lana whimpers, and is lifted up out of the pram by another adult who speaks to her: "Come on Lana" and carries her to the dough table. Lana's mother checks whether the adult is "all right with Lana". Another child at the dough table asks how old Lana is. The reply is "3 months 2 weeks". The adult carries Lana with her to another room.

9.15 The adult returns to the playdough table, sits with Lana on her knee. Lana gazes at other children as they arrive. Lana coughs. The adult says "Oh, Lana". Lana hiccoughs. She is lifted by the adult on to her feet, and supported to stand on the dough table. The adult looks directly at L and smiles. "Have you got the hiccoughs?" Lana settles back on the adult's knee. The adult talks to the older children and other adults at the dough table. The adult holds her arms around Lana and works with dough in her hands, explaining to Lana "we'll squash it all down". Lana lies quietly in the adult's arms. The adult talks to older child nearby. She lifts Lana up and walks to the cassette player, saying to her "Let's put some music on".

The adult lies Lana on floor (near observer) with plastic blocks and cars. Lana lies on her stomach, eyes fixing on a yellow plastic rattle, and vocalises "Ah". The adult responds "Ah, Lana". Lana watches an older child. The adult smiles at Lana and encourages the older child to do a puzzle.

Lana vocalises. "What's that noise?" asks the adult, in a gentle tone. She lifts Lana up in her arms and settles her back in her pram, shaking a rattle and talking in soothing tones "good girl, come over here" (she wheels the pram near the music and into a sunny corner). The adult and an older child sing "ring a ring a roses" to the music on the tape, smiling at Lana, then concentrate on building a railway track with a wooden block construction set.

9.45am At the playdough table inside. An adult takes Lana (aged 3 months) on her knee, Z (2 years) moves close by and starts a puzzle with his mother and another child, an older boy. The adult places Lana in her pram to sleep, covering her with a blanket.

10.15am Morning tea. Lana continues sleeping in the pram.

10.40am Lana lies asleep in her pram next to the puzzle table. Z (2 years 3 months) plays next to her, with a big wooden puzzle of a butterfly.

These are some of the observational records on which Lana's Learning Story is based.

Example

10.45am Lana remains asleep in her pram beside the dough table. Her mother and several other adults check her regularly. A child is playing vigorously on the piano nearby. Lana remains asleep on her back. 10.47am Lana moves her legs and her left arm, but remains asleep in the pram. A small group of 3 children and an adult nearby are making shapes with blocks, the adult counting to 17 blocks and asking questions about the number and shape of the blocks. Lana continues sleeping. The adult and children find a hexagon, then move on to the collage table. 11.28am Baby Lana is inside in her pram still. An adult has covered her with another blanket. Several adults and children are playing music and dancing nearby. Lana coughs, but remains asleep. Her mother appears and checks her, looking into the pram. Another adult asks if the music is too loud for her. The music "Hey hey, skip to Maloo" is playing on the cassette recorder and the adult and children are playing instruments including a castanet. Lana's mother responds "No", the music continues, and Lana remains sleeping in her pram beside the dough table.

12.20pm Four supervising adults are seated at the puzzles table, after the end of the session when only their own children remain at the centre. They are having a discussion about individual children, for example, where they were (contexts/activities), the extent of their joining in, whether they were inside or outside. The adults recall that baby Lana was with 3 adults, on the floor she played with a rattle and plastic toy. "A very contented child" says D, the adult who spent some time with her.

A teaching story, based on observations of an individual adult "B" illustrates the importance at this centre of the principle of including children and family members in learning and teaching processes.

Adult B's Teaching Story Including Children and Family Members

BELONGING	B spends time on contacts with family and community. B greets the adults and children as they arrive, focusing mainly on the adults at first and explaining the planned happenings of the morning. B is taken to meet a visiting mother who hopes to enrol her child, and she explains the parent co-operative system and centre philosophy. B includes a visiting grandparent first by asking the child if he has "brought someone special to playcentre". B's involvement with the families and community reflects the emphasis of this centre. B uses her dialogue with her own child to encourage children to sit down while eating, to emphasise the "rules" of the playcentre.
WELLBEING	B checks the adult-child ratios constantly. When outside with a group of children she calls "I need another adult out here".
EXPLORATION	B becomes immersed in the "slime" to encourage the more timid children to explore this medium/context: "Here look R., I've got a ball to catch. The ball is slime". She also explains the learning processes and concepts to be explored, e.g., "traction", to the adults who are present.
COMMUNICATION	B. emphasises "delight" in verbal communication during play, e.g., by being an active, fully involved participant in the "froggy" game. She encourages each child's oral participation, focusing on geometric shapes and colours.
CONTRIBUTION	B encourages children to take responsibility for their own actions e.g., she guides two girls to take responsibility for hosing down the swing they have painted, in order to allow other children to sit on it. B encourages children to solve problems about other children's needs e.g., when one child is without a drink at morning tea time she involves all of the children in a nearby group in working out a solution. She encourages children to teach other children and adults.

Observational Transcript Excerpts: Adult "B", co-ordinator at a morning playcentre session for children aged from birth to school age.

9am B (adult co-ordinating the session) arrives pushing a double pushchair with 2 children. She greets other adults on arrival. They talk about backpacks (one toddler is arriving in a backpack on his mother's back), and pushchairs. B greets parents on arrival. She explains that they are doing things with shapes today. More parents arrive pushing pushchairs, older children walking. This is a session with mainly younger 3-year-olds.

9.15am Another adult and a small group of children are making dough. They squish the playdough through their fingers. B, the co-ordinating adult, arrives at table "Hello everyone. Is it a bit sticky Z?" B moves on to the next room.

9.55am Another mother arrives at the door wheeling a pushchair. B, the team co-ordinator is taken to meet her. B explains about the playcentre sessions. The adult says she went to kindergarten with her child when at a previous residence, they have just moved to this district. B explains about the parent co-operative system and parent helping. Explains to the mother that she can come to some introductory sessions and an introductory meeting to see if that's what she wants. The mother sounds positive about parent helping.

It's morning tea time. A child says "I haven't got my drink bottle". B asks the other children "What are we going to do about that?" Another child suggests getting some water. "Where?" "From the tap" replies the child. B "Let's find her some water from the tap, and we'll put it in cup". B and the children move to the tap.

B and 2 children are back at the train tracks. All the other children are sitting at the table with their lunch boxes. B explains to her own child that he should be sitting down while eating "That's the rule at playcentre". She carries her child and moves away to get a story book to read to the group during morning tea.

10.20am It's story time at the food table. B holds up the book and reads about a baby in a basket (who grows a bit and moves to a cot). One child leans on B's knee. B asks an adult to collect her own son who is moving around eating. B continues reading about a child turning 1 year then 3 years. "Jack and Kate share in a fine birthday treat" she reads. She holds up the book, the children eat and focus on the book. Seven children are seated at the table. The children intervene with comments and questions about how old children/cats are. "So the basket got used a lot longer didn't it?" the adult asks in relation to the story. An infant coughs and spills/posits some milk beside B. Another adult brings a cloth on request. B starts another story "I'm as sad as . . . as happy as." K says (in relation to the story) that he has rabbits (in response to a picture of a rabbit). B asks about how many rabbits. K replies. "And what are their names?" K says he can't remember their names. B continues to read "I'm as tame as a poodle. I'm as wild as a chimp, I'm as busy as a bee." Then she pauses and asks "Who's busy at playcentre today?" The children make "bzz" sounds. B finishes the story, and adds "sometimes you feel like all those things don't you?" B reads a final story about a child and her mother who move to a flat in town when the father leaves home, they adopt a cat to help Annie's loneliness. There are just 3 children left at the table now, most of the others have moved outside, some on to the floor. "They've moved lots of times haven't they?" asks B (referring to the book).

(Outside observations of adult role/plus family and community) 10.40am B goes up to a child aged about 3 years who is sitting on a bench opposite the sandpit, with an older beside him. B says "R (child's name) did you bring someone special to playcentre today? Grandma?" He replies "Yes my Nanna". B asks "Is Nanna going to play in the sandpit?" Child laughs "No". Nanna replies "I might". B discusses with Nanna how the children like snacks quite often (Nanna has shown her a bag of snacks).

B moves to the opposite side of the sandpit. Two boys are seated in a large trolley. B assists one more girl into the trolley. B's own child cries, he wants to go in the trolley again. "No room at the inn" says B. She adds to another adult alongside "He's had one turn and he didn't want to get out". B calls out "I need another adult out here". There are seven children outside with B and one more child sitting beside his grandmother. Another adult comes out immediately. B asks the children in the trolley "Who's getting out?" She lifts one child out, and another child in to take turns. Two adults settle three children in the trolley. B wheels the trolley along the ground, making vehicle noises.

B wheels the trolley up to two girls F and M, aged 4 years, who are at the swings. "F and M how are you going to fix that problem? You know you're not meant to paint the swings eh? What else do you want to paint?" She suggests getting the hose, and three children run to fetch the hose. B asks F and M "What

These are excerpts of the observations from which "B's" teaching story was developed

Example

are the rules about painting what we sit or stand on?" One girl says "We don't". B holds the hose over the swing seat. F and the other girl co-operate by scrubbing the swing seat with (dish washing) brushes to remove the paint. B explains that if people sit on it they would get paint on them. F and M scrub methodically. "Scrub it hard girls" says B. Meanwhile another adult is wheeling younger children in the trolley. B stops hosing, and F and M carry the swing seat back. "Now girls, oh are you going to hang it up to dry?" B asks the two girls, who hang the piece of swing on a climbing pole to dry.

10.55am B and two other adults are at the trough with four children. The children hold up "slime" it's bright pink slime today. Meanwhile, B's toddler is moving sand from the sandpit. B leaves the trough and explains to the toddler about keeping sand in the sandpit, one arm around him as he shovels the sand back into the sandpit. B takes the toddler inside.

11.10am B and three older children play "froggy". B and one child stand on a grass mound. B says "Froggy, froggy can I cross your golden river?" The child replies "Only if." B helps with "If you've got white socks". The child repeats these words. They all run together. They repeat another round of the game, this time the adult suggests "Only if you can make a triangle with your arms" (continuing the shapes theme planned for the day). All of the children, and B, make a triangle shape with their arms. All of the children form their arms into a triangle shape. F (girl aged 4 years) joins in and during the next round responds "Only if you're wearing brown". After a few more rounds, B asks another child if he wants to play "What's the time Mr Wolf?" The children ask to continue playing "Froggy". B and the children say in chorus "Froggy, froggy may I cross your golden river". Another child responds, with some prompting help from B, "Only if you're wearing pink". The children initiate most of the words now. B stays actively involved and follows the children's lead. Finally B says "Only if you're wearing sandals".

B and the children are now making shapes with their bodies on the grass. The children stand and lie in positions to make shapes. B assists them to get the appropriate angle for a triangle. Next they make a square. B says "Now we've got a . . . ?" The children respond in chorus "a square". B and six children continue making body shapes. Two 4-year-old girls (F & M) decide they are "all wet" after lying on the grass. The children go inside.

11.25am B, another adult, and four children are outside at the slime trough. B discovers that another mother who has called into the session to collect her son does not know how to play "Froggy, froggy". B encourages two older girls and four other children to take the adult to the grass to teach her "Froggy, froggy". B and W and two children manipulate pink slime at the slime trough. B says to a child "Here R, look, I've got a ball to catch. The ball is Slime" (the other adult and the children join in to say "slime"). Meanwhile, the two 4-year-old girls are playing "Froggy, froggy" with the adult E, explaining to her what to do.

11.30 Cleaning up time. B arrives at the trough where the children are adding water to the pink slime. B asks "Hey where is my slime?" The children ask B "Do you like pink water?" The children empty the pink water from the trough into a bowl, and using a small container, into the sandpit. B explains to another adult who has arrived to collect a child about "manipulation" and "traction" involved in the slime activity. The children empty the trough themselves, and hose in more water to rinse it. 11.35am Four children continue to empty water from the slime trough.

12pm Evaluation meeting. The adults discuss their evaluation of individual children. M played with shapes then "got distracted". Another adult evaluates another child who "really enjoyed doing Froggy, froggy". F "did Froggy, froggy and painted swings with M and helped to clean up with the others". F copied sounds and echos, and played with M in the library. Two more children are evaluated. (U) was initially unsettled then played in the dough, then observed other children in the sandpit. One adult thought she was telling M off every 5 minutes (eating the girls play lunch). B responds that the two girls like to eat together in playhouse outside, but this makes them "hard to supervise, so I think we make it a rule that they eat outside on the steps, but have pretend meals in the playhouse".

There is some discussion about the parent who dropped in for the first time. B says she explained some of the important things about playcentre to the visitor, and asks how the centre waiting list is. E says that new parents are calling her every day on the phone, wanting to get in to the centre. Discussion of waiting list follows. B asks the adults who were on the session "How do you feel the session went?" Their responses include "It was quiet, but they did a lot, the slime, the dough". One adult thought it was "more relaxed than Monday", more "going with the flow". She thought the 4-year-olds found enough to do today. B said "We often plan baking and things, but don't want to distract them from what they are doing". B said W was very good at getting the children to help her make the playdough.

These are excerpts from the observational records from which "B's" teaching story was developed.

Example

Overall "Centre Teaching Stories" for "Te Moana" Playcentre

The learning and teaching stories, and the tabulated draft which follow, were checked with a group of adults attending a follow-up meeting at the playcentre. The adults attending this centre meeting were pleased to have observations of their evaluation meetings, held at the end of each session, included in the centre observations and in the centre teaching story. They commented that it was appropriate to summarise the analyses of their evaluation meeting observations as "implications for management" in the overall teaching stories.

**“Te Moana” Playcentre
Centre Teaching Stories**

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through “responsive, reciprocal, respectful” adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
BELONGING	Knows and understands children's and adults' interests and background At each session, adults work as a team to involve individual children in the programme.	Children participate actively in preparing the environment, e.g., making playdough, diluting “slime”.	Family members who visit the centre are included in the programme. Inter-generational connections are supported.	During an evaluation meeting held at the end of each session, adults assess individual children's involvement in the programme, and evaluate the learning environment.
WELLBEING	Infants' and children's needs are met immediately The co-ordinating adults constantly check the ratios in the outdoor area and inside. Adults anticipate and respond warmly to infants' and children's emotional needs.	Children (including those who are “less outgoing” or more timid) are supported to explore the environment, including “mucky” media, (e.g., slime, dough, baking mixture, mud, sand, water). Adults and older children check the sound levels (e.g., the volume of the music they are playing or creating) to allow infants to sleep.	Parents and younger siblings regularly participate with the older children.	If a health and safety question arises during a session, this is discussed at the evaluation meeting and referred for action to the appropriate office holder in the centre.

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
COMMUNICATION	Facilitates reciprocal conversations in English; Māori words are also introduced Adults frequently initiate conversations related to the task/activity/context. They encourage and respond to children's talk about the task, and their interests. Each child's oral participation is extended, focusing on a range of specific concepts (for example, geographic shapes and measures).	Music, singing, and story reading are provided inside and outside. Children and adults have ready access to the library, which is a small separate room.	Parents with specialist knowledge (e.g., Maori language) are consulted during sessions or at arrival and departure times.	
EXPLORATION	Spontaneous choice of contexts; encouragement to persist when a child shows interest Adults extend children's explorations by joining in with delight and participating alongside individual children or groups of children.	All areas are available to the children to explore.	Parents involved in the design of the outdoor area arranged for an uncultivated patch to be left available for exploration.	At the conclusion of every session, during the evaluation meeting, adults discuss ways to extend individual children's thinking and participation.

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
CONTRIBUTION	Encourages children to take responsibility for their own actions as they affect others Adults encourage children to work co-operatively on solutions to meet the needs of others. Older children demonstrate sharing to younger children. There is an overall emphasis on sharing and co-operation, which is also modelled by the adults' teamwork.	Most things are accessible to the children. Children take some responsibility for their own lunch (snack) boxes, and for ensuring their peers have food and drink.	Children are encouraged to take responsibility for sharing their new knowledge and experiences with older and younger family members during the session.	

Teaching Story at "Te Moana" in Action

At the preliminary interview with the session co-ordinators, they had specified that baking and outdoor play in the sandpit were possible contexts for observing Te Whāriki in action.

The overall teaching stories for this centre were applied and tested against the observations and NUD*IST analyses of a group "happening"—baking. The key components of the centre teaching stories are in bold in the first column, under each strand of Te Whāriki.

Baking at Playcentre: A "Te Moana" Teaching Story in Action

BELONGING Knows and understands children's and adults' interests and background	The children are invited to join the baking group and to take an active part.
WELLBEING Infants' and children's needs are met immediately	The co-ordinator supports and encourages two of the more timid children, emphasising that they are needed. The adults intermittently check children's wellbeing. When a toddler is injured in another room, the co-ordinator moves away to check and support her and the adults with her.
EXPLORATION Spontaneous choice of contexts; encouragement to persist when a child shows interest	One child is very involved in the baking. This child makes a new mixture, and is encouraged to take a more active part in working out measuring procedures the second time.
COMMUNICATION Facilitates reciprocal conversations in English; Maori words are also introduced, discussed, and encouraged	The co-ordinating adult asks questions about baking, and explains the measurements and ingredients. The procedures are explained, with some discussion about quantity and measurement.
CONTRIBUTION Encourages children to take responsibility for their own actions as they affect others	There is an emphasis on sharing and group responsibility. The children are encouraged to work out their own solutions to measuring ingredients (e.g., the co-ordinator asks a child "What do you think you'll do to get it out?")

Observational Transcript Excerpts: Cooking context.

At the baking area in the main room the dough is set up (it's yesterday's purple, white, and green dough). A 4-year-old child arrives with his mother, holding her hand. Another adult asks the mother who has just arrived for the Maori word for purple. The mother responds that she used to use the transliteration (papura) but recently found two more possible words, tawa and one other. There is some discussion among three adults about tawa being the tree and the colour. The mother stays at the table for a short time until her son is settled. The child (4 yr) talks confidently to a father and his toddler who are seated at the table. He takes a bowl and asks if it is the biggest bowl.

10.30am Context: Cooking at the dough table. This is an adult-led group "happening". There are 11 children and one adult at the table. K (the co-ordinator) encourages each child to have a turn to add an ingredient, talking about the amounts and measures. "You need three quarters of a cup". "And an egg. Crack it in. And the milk." "U (to one of the more "timid" children), are you okay doing it? Good girl, that's good".

Example

The Teaching Story in Action is based on these observations.

"Have we got vanilla?" K asks G (another adult), who looks around the kitchen area. The two adults looking in the kitchen cannot find vanilla. "Don't worry about it" says K. K turns back to the children and explains: "What I'll do is I'll let this half (of the children at the table) hang on, because there are so many in this half (i.e., children in this group). You guys, all roll out the biscuits, and this half can stir the dough. "Don't worry" (to another adult, about the dough). The three adults take portions of dough and give each child a small ball to roll out. K says "You're doing really well there S (child about 3-4). You take it in your hands, use both hands, and squash it in a little ball. I'll show you. You take it in your hands and roll it in a little ball". S watches then runs from table (to wash his hands). Just K and one adult and two girls remain at the table.

10.45am K moves to an adjacent room to check whether a crying child is all right. " (Her father) is with her" says another adult. K returns to the table and the cooking. K, other adult, two girls, and one younger boy remain at the table. "R, we'll make up one more lot" says K moving from the table. Everyone leaves the table except R (aged 3). K and R work together "It's two and a half (cups of coconut). I've done one", says K and helps R to measure a cup of cornflour. "What do you think you'll do to get it out?" R adjusts the packet carefully, working out how to tip the cornflour.

K asks two other children if they want to make another one (another batch of mixture). They join the group. K. gives R an egg to break: "Do you want to break the egg?" K then says to the other girl present, "Do you want to come over here? We need a cup of milk - in the cup. Then we'll pour it into the bowl". The girl pours the milk. "We're making some more" says R delightedly. K asks "Does it taste good?" as a child eats a sample of the mixture. Another child, a toddler, is hurt. K checks the child briefly; he is with another adult. K returns to the bowl, stirs, and says to other girl "U try not to put it in your mouth okay". U watches and holds a teaspoon in her hands as K the adult and R stir the dough. K rolls a piece, then says "You roll it hard and then you pass it to the other hand and squash it that's it" (to U) "and then you squash it just like playdough". The two girls continue rolling out balls of dough together. K checks other children, then checks the first batch of coconut biscuits cooking in the oven, at the same time talking to another adult who is in the kitchen with a child (in the highchair). She moves back to the table: "How are you going U?" She stands above U with her arms over U's, helping her mould the ball of dough. U leaves the table soon after. R remains fully absorbed in rolling the dough balls. K goes to the oven and removes a tray of biscuits. R and M (boy 3-4) finish making biscuit balls together. K takes them to the oven. R and M sit eating the raw dough. M holds the large baking bowl up to his mouth to eat, then he moves away. Just K and R remain at the table. R helps K wipe the table, still eating small samples. "I like cooking more" says R, then moves away from the table. K (the adult) wipes the table.

Example

Evaluation meeting—there are comments about individual children in the cooking context. For example: A girl (aged 3) is evaluated, referring back to the baking table context. She found it hard to roll (the biscuits) but she really persevered. She doesn't know us all yet but she did (get involved).

Centre 3

"TANIWHA"

Description of "Taniwha" Playcentre

"Taniwha" Playcentre is situated in a roomy, converted house with a large outdoor area. The playcentre's community is described as mainly middle class/mixed. There is a small number of children from different cultural groups. All but one session has its own team of parents and co-ordinator, who are responsible for the programme. The exception is the starter group for new children and their parents, and two experienced parents are responsible for the session. The playcentre is managed by a committee of parents.

Two and a half hour sessions are held from 9.15 am–11.45 am, Monday to Friday and the starter group from 12 noon–2.30 pm on Thursdays. One-year-olds attend one session, 2-year-olds two sessions, 3-year-olds three sessions, and 4-year-olds four sessions. There are 34 children on the roll. The average group size is 18. The number of parents in the team ranges from four to six. The minimum ratio of adults to children is one to four but in practice this is higher because additional adults tend to stay during the session.

Learning and Teaching Stories

The playcentre caters for children aged from birth to school age and their families. One learning story was constructed from the observational records and analyses, and focused on a boy aged 1 year and 10 months.

Two teaching stories involving team members were also constructed from the observational records and analyses, one of a father and the other of a mother. A context story of the starter group arrival time, focused on the adult co-ordinator, demonstrates the centre's overall teaching story in action.

The "Learning Story" developed for the boy, "Alex", follows.

"Alex's" Learning Story at "Taniwha" Playcentre

BELONGING	"A" shows by the confident way in which he moves about the centre that he knows the environment well. By his behaviour he shows that he understands what the equipment is for and that things have their own special place. His mother's and brother's presence help him to be at ease, "at home", in the centre.
WELLBEING	Alex laughs, smiles, and enjoys interactions with others. He independently involves himself contentedly with a number of activities. His mother's responses of acceptance and praise validate his good behaviour.
EXPLORATION	For much of the observation period Alex was very interested in eating from a lunch box, first from his own lunch box and later from his mother's and brother's. He showed persistence in managing to open the block bag, in helping himself to puzzles and in trying to cut sellotape, all difficult operations for him.
COMMUNICATION	Alex's vocabulary consists of some recognisable words and others which are almost recognisable. He integrates these with his actions and in communicating with others. He can follow adult instructions and make his needs known.
CONTRIBUTION	Alex can take responsibility for putting things where they belong when requested to do so.

"Alex", aged 1 year and 10 months, at "Taniwha" playcentre (an observation for part of his morning).

9.14am Alex is outside holding his lunch box. He climbs the steps to the verandah where his mother is putting clay from a bin on the table. She smiles, "Hello" and he touches some clay in her hand: "Ooh!"

"Yes, sticky" says his mother. He touches some clay on the table: "Ba".

"Put it back?" queries his mother. She tells him to put his lunch box on the lunch table. He walks inside, moves into the block area and out again, falls near the lunch table, then climbs on to a chair, opens his box and commences eating. He is the only child at the table.

9.25am Alex is outside seated at a dough table. A team member puts a box of crepe paper streamers on the table. Alex has brought his lunch box with him and is eating. He picks up a streamer, a gust of wind blows it away and more streamers fall to the ground. Alex picks them up and carefully puts them back in the box.

Soon he climbs into the sandpit, picks up a spade nearly as tall as himself and digs. He tries to work a ditch digger and a slightly older boy takes over, soon leaving, and Alex returns and climbs on to the digger's seat. The boy runs to his mother and says, "It's my digger!" She replies, "When Alex has finished it's your turn." Alex pushes the lever back and forth, smiling at me. This back and forth exchange of the digger between Alex and the boy continues.

Example

10.22am Alex has found Simon's (his brother) lunch box (I suspect he has taken it from Simon's bag, hanging on a peg beside his own). A team member gives it to Simon at the lunch table. Alex says "Ooh!" and sits at the table. His mother looks at his hands and says, "Come and wash your hands". Alex objects but goes with her. Because he has eaten all his food she gives him her lunch box. He smiles and points to the sink: "Oh oh". His mother says: "I'll get you a drink of water". He drinks thirstily, then places his cup carefully and safely away from the lunch box which he opens and takes out a piece of cake.

His mother is reading a story at the table. There are two boys and one girl listening as they eat. It is a peaceful time as the other children are outdoors. Alex drinks again and the cake goes in and out of the box. He picks up a book from a pile beside his mother, and a boy reaches across, takes it from him and puts it back.

His mother says "Let him look at it, it's all right".

Alex moves his chair nearer to Simon, looks in Simon's lunch box and reaches for a cracker. "Aaah!" he says. Simon cries, "No!". Alex cries and runs to his mother who asks Simon to give him a cracker which he does very nicely. She says, "Thank you, Simon that was very nice".

10.50am Alex is alone in the block room, reaching up to shelves where puzzles are displayed, trying to lift some down. This is quite difficult for him as the shelves are high for a toddler. He spills several on the floor but manages one successfully. He turns his attention to a large zipper bag containing cardboard blocks. He concentrates hard and manages to pull the zipper open. He lifts out two blocks "Up Up". He places one on top of the other and carries them to the main room where his mother is still reading stories at the lunch table. He drops them on the floor, fetches a bowl containing the remains of finger paint and shows it to his mother. She says, "Isn't it nice—sticky". He walks away with the bowl and she calls, "Alex, put it on the table". He does so and she says "Good boy".

He carries it again and she repeats her instruction. He complies and she says, "Good boy, thank you". He picks up a can of soap foam and carries it to her. She says, "Smell it. Isn't it nice?" He puts the can in the bowl, stirs it with a spatula, looks at me and smiles. He picks up an umbrella, shows it to me and says "Daa Lo" (? "look"). He returns to the block room and sits on two blocks: "Sea" (? "seat"). He tries unsuccessfully to close the zip of the plastic block bag.

Alex moves to the main room and attempts to cut sellotape from a dispenser, with scissors. This is too hard for him but he persists.

11.17am He walks about with an ice cream container on his head. "Haa!" (? "hat")

11.27am He navigates a wooden cart from the family area, past an obstructing chair and then to the verandah and the carpentry bench where he attempts to use a saw. He returns inside and lifts his cart over the small step: "Up!"

11.40 am He is back in the block room where a mother has just changed her baby and placed her in a baby chair. Alex points at her and says "Baby". The mother responds, "Yes, a baby. She's watching to see what we do". Alex says "Ooh", smiles at the baby and kneels beside her. The mother says "A little baby."

Alex smiles and laughs and points to the baby's arm. The mother says, "Yes, that's her cardigan and that's her foot". She lifts her baby and sits on the couch to feed her. Alex sits still, watching.

(The researcher spoke to his mother about his almost recognisable words. She said she had noticed this development only in the last week.)

These are some of the observational records which formed the basis for Alex's Learning Story.

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The first Teaching Story which follows was constructed from observations of a mother during fantasy play.

Adult "J's" Fantasy Play Teaching Story

BELONGING	Throughout the episode J encouraged the girls in their roles of "bad witches", supporting them and giving recognition of their fantasy. She was "one of them", a part of the play.
WELLBEING	By her stimulating presence she was able to help them stay "in role" and to concentrate on and develop their expanding ideas. They were able to play out these scary ideas in a secure environment, taking risks and returning to safety.
EXPLORATION	By utilising nearby materials and equipment, she provided a model for the girls to use things creatively and symbolically, e.g., a magic transformation of a drumstick to a broomstick. Her suggestions and involvement resulted in rich fantasy play, with the exploration of ideas and feelings and the recording of these in graphic form.
COMMUNICATION	J's careful observation and understanding of the girls' play enabled her to enter appropriately, take on a role and become part of the play as an equal player, not a dominator. The children accepted her with delight and she took the lead from them and extended their ideas in tune with them. This resulted in a rich flow of language used in expressive ways.
CONTRIBUTION	J and the girls were involved in co-operative play. She accepted and respected their ideas. They listened to each other and shared feelings. The girls had an opportunity to be "mean" and "bad" in acceptable ways returning at times to being good witches.

Observational Transcript Excerpts: Adult support of children's fantasy play.

Two girls, A and L, aged 4 years, are sitting on the Mobile Gym at one end of the room. They had piled the gym mats around the base to make a witch's house. They are speaking in mean, witchy voices.

L: "I've got yukky things to eat. I'll make M (another child) into a witch. We are witches".

A: "Yes, we are witches".

L: "We are witches".

A: "Yes, we are witches".

L rearranges the mat walls while A sits atop the gym.

A: "I can't jump now" (because the mats are no longer on the floor).

L: "We're not playing jumping, we're playing witches! Here we are, here we are".

A: "Don't put that there (a mat) until I jump. I'll be scared . . . What's the witchy wand?"

L: "Are you OK?"

A: "Yes".

They are completely in role now and the witchy voices are shrill and excited.

Adult J comes by, sees me observing, listens and watches and smiles. When she has observed for a moment, she quietly sits on the floor near the gym and unobtrusively insinuates herself even closer to the play. She calls, "Who am I? Who can I be? A witch?" "Yes!" shriek A and L.

J: "How do I turn into a witch? Wai wa agh agh! (imitating their sounds) Am I a witch now?"

A and L: "Yes!"

J: "Where are we going?"

L: "I'm catching more people over there".

J: "And how are we going to get them? In a bag?"

Example

A: "Look what I've found. A little princess." She is holding a doll.
 J: "Is she fat enough?"
 L: "She is as fat as a child. Wai wai wai warey!" She waves her arms and pulls a fierce face. "We can eat her for dinner."
 J: " Shall I go and look for some more children?" She grabs a long handled drum. "I've got my broomstick."
 A and L grab nearby drumsticks and fly with J to the family corner, returning with three dolls.
 J: "We're getting only dolly children and turning them into toads."
 L: "I'm making a spell."

J fetches paper and pen and sketches a toad, baby toads and a spider. She draws a tadpole. "That's a baby toad from an egg."

All three chant a spell and L waves a music clapper loudly and turns the toad back into a girl. A fetches some scissors and cuts out the tadpole.

J: "Can you draw me a spider?"
 L: "All right" and starts to draw.
 A "I can draw a . . ." (did not catch her words).
 J: "I'll go and get some more paper." On her return, she and L talk about the number of legs a spider has.
 A: "What do you want me to draw? I'm gong to turn mine into a little girl. You have to choose."
 J: "Can I have a good witch?"
 A: "I can only draw a bad witch."
 J: "OK" (in a witchy voice, and A sets about drawing) "Magic word, piggy piggy woo woo, find me a hairy spider do."
 L: "I'll turn into a spider too, a poisonous good spider."
 A: "No, it's a bad witch."
 L: "Her teeth are rotten because she hasn't brushed them for a long time."
 J: "How's A's witch coming on? Has she got a smelly breath?"
 L: "I'm going to draw another spider."

J fetches a sheet of black paper and quickly makes a witch hat. Soon she has made three. L and A are drawing very carefully and still speaking in their witchy voices. J, at their request, makes witch bracelets for them.

(I left them at this stage but the play continued for some time.)

These are excerpts from the observations which were the basis of adult "J's" teaching story.

This second teaching story is based on observations of a father who respectfully encouraged children to share.

Adult R's Respectful and Responsive Teaching Story

BELONGING	R's discussion with his son was built on a secure relationship, and took place in a quiet and peaceful spot in the centre where E frequently plays. It ended with E expressing spontaneous affection and kissing his father.
WELLBEING	R treated E with respect. At no time did he censure E for being unwilling to share, rather, he used reasoned argument and accepted E's right to disagree and to state his opinion assertively. R warmly praised E when he admitted to being a little selfish. Earlier, when E was hurt by a falling block, R checked out the reason and acknowledged his own responsibility for the accident.
EXPLORATION	The game, introduced by R encouraged children to focus on their sense of touch as much as their sense of sight. He suggested strategies to aid their discoveries. The subsequent discussion enabled them to think and reason about the justice of turn taking and considering others.
COMMUNICATION	R and E were engaged in a turn-taking, reciprocal conversation with neither adult nor child dominating. Each listened carefully to the other's point of view and responded thoughtfully. An important concept was carefully explored.
CONTRIBUTION	The "magic window" game involved turn taking. When E had difficulty in understanding this, R used the opportunity to engage him in a thoughtful discussion about E's rights and those of others. This led to E accepting the reasons for sharing in a warm and peaceful resolution.

Observation of R—A respectful adult /child relationship.

R, a father member of the centre team, has capitalised on a girl building walls with blocks, to suggest a game, "Who's Inside?" He found an old curtain and has covered the walls to make a little house in which a child can fit and be hidden from view. There are five children present, including his son, E, and his toddler daughter, J. R tells the children the house has a magic window. He asks the children to close their eyes, secretly helps a girl to hide in the house and then tells the children to open their eyes. The hider pokes her feet out from under the curtain and R and the children look and feel the feet and try to guess whose they are. They may also feel through the curtain, nose ears and hands.

E has a furry lion's head on. R asks the children "What sort of hair did you feel through the curtain? Was it like this?" feeling E's lion head. "No" say the children. E takes his shoes off and lifts the curtain. The girl has escaped by the "back door". She peeps around the side of the house and everyone laughs.

They all close their eyes. "I want to" says E and puts himself, still wearing the lion head, in the house. The children open their eyes and feel the lion's nose through the curtain. R says, "Who has a plastic nose? Feel the ears, feel the feet, what's this?" (pulling off E's socks). E moves around in the house which collapses and a wooden block falls on him.

He cries, "I wanted my socks!" R puts them on and E puts on the lion head.

R: "Are you all right, son?" E: "Yes."

R: "Yes, we shouldn't have tried to pull them off. Did we pull S's (previous girl) socks off?" E shakes his head.

R: "Sometimes we have accidents."

E: "And sometimes we change our minds."

A little later, E is upset because another girl, A, had a turn of the magic window before he did and says "I haven't had a turn." A says, "Yes you did" (this is true.) E says, "I didn't see myself have a turn."

Another child has just come out of the magic window. E says "It's my turn."

These are some of the observational records which served as the basis for "R's" teaching story.

R asks him "Can J (his little sister) have a turn with you?"
E : "I don't want J. What can we do?"
R talks to him about co-operation and looking after little ones.
E says "I'm the biggest. I'm 3 I can have the turn."

Example

A is sitting listening too. R says to her "A, do you have to wait a long time for something sometimes, say at the movies, so that you are fair to those waiting before you?" A says "Yes."

R: "So, E, you need to sort out what happens here."

E: "Yes, but sometimes I need to go first."

R: "If little F (another toddler) was waiting before you, you need to know that person waiting needs the turn. What do we call someone who pushes in? " Being selfish." Have you heard that word?"

E is sitting inside the magic window with the curtain up. He and A are really listening to R.

E asks, " What does selfish mean?"

R explains again and then says, "Do you think you were a little bit selfish?"

E: "I think so".

R: "That's great that you think that. Do you think that being selfish was a good thing to do to J?"

E: "No".

R: "OK, E, because you are older you need to think a little bit more about that. OK, E?"

E: "OK." He smiles and gives R a cuddle.

R: "What about giving J a cuddle? I think she would like that."

E gives J a cuddle and smiles.

The overall "centre teaching stories" for "Taniwha" playcentre follow.

**"Taniwha" Playcentre
Centre Teaching Stories**

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
BELONGING	Affirming the value of parents and children working and learning together Families, team members, and children come to know each other well, and the adults are alert to supporting children's strengths, interests, and needs. The frequent presence of their parents in the team adds to the children's sense of security and belonging. They are seldom upset by the departure of their parents. The centre is like a second home to most children who have attended since they were babies or toddlers. Team members relate to them warmly and with understanding.	There is a warm, relaxed atmosphere with opportunities for energetic group play as well as quiet, inviting places for more retiring children. Equipment and materials are easily accessible to children who know where to find them. Many of the play provisions have links with home and allow children to explore familiar adult roles. It is a place where mothers can change and breastfeed babies and settle them to sleep. As the session progresses it is accepted that there is a comfortable disorder which is inevitable when young children play and explore.	All parents are members of the playcentre. Several fathers attend and participate in the programme. Parents understand the value of learning through play and the importance of their participation in the programme and running of the centre. The centre is a place for making friends and finding support.	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
WELLBEING	Enhancing children's feelings of personal worth, confidence, and self-respect Adults relate easily to children and are sensitive to their interests and needs, showing a consistency of affection. Children are trusting of other adults besides their parents. Adults take time to listen to children's ideas and concerns which they treat with respect. They assist children in self-help skills until they can manage independently. Care is taken to ensure their safety and adults provide warm physical comfort when needed. They support children's attempts at challenges and recognise and applaud their achievements.	The environment is homelike, warm and friendly but challenging with many areas where children can experience success and satisfaction. There is a free flow of play between the indoor and outdoor activities. Children can choose where and when they wish to play and whether to expend energy or eat and rest.	The active involvement of parents in the centre enables them to know the children well so that they can support and encourage them in appropriate ways. There is a co-ordinated approach for any children who may have a special need and support for their parents. All parents have the opportunity at session evaluation meetings to discuss within the group their own children's strengths and needs and the implications for the programme.	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
EXPLORATION	Inviting children to explore ideas about personal relationships as well as discovering the natural and physical world Adults' own interests and curiosity act as catalysts in encouraging children's explorations and discoveries. Adults unobtrusively enter such situations and are alert to their possibilities. They enhance the children's interests without dominating. Rich dramatic play allows children to explore scary ideas with the nearby presence of trusted adults. Unhurried time is spent exploring with children difficulties they encounter in playing with others thus expanding their ideas about fairness.	Individual team members provide resources and ideas from home as an addition or extension to the basic 16 areas of play. The outdoor and indoor environments are arranged to provide wide opportunities for exploration, discovery, and problem solving. Children's play is uninterrupted and they have plentiful time and space to think and experiment. Messy activities and cooking offer enjoyable sensory explorations.	New parents are helped to appreciate the value of self-chosen free play and exploration by being encouraged to experience these themselves. They work with enjoyment alongside their children. They learn to observe children at play and how adults work effectively with them.	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
COMMUNICATION	Encouraging children's expression of their feelings and ideas The high adult/child ratio results in children interacting with many adults and hearing a range of adult voices, especially for the older children who attend four sessions a week. Adults engage children in reflective discussions about their own and others' rights. They are encouraged to voice their feelings and the sensitive responses of the adults can result in sustained conversations. The reading of stories to individuals or a small group is a strong feature of the programme. Adult support for dramatic play provides rich opportunities for expressing ideas creatively.	The wide range of equipment, materials, and play areas assist children to express themselves creatively, non-verbally as well as verbally. There is a well-stocked library where children select books which interest them. The morning tea table is a popular place for stories for a small number of children but stories are frequently read in other comfortable and quiet places. Small secluded spots enable children to hold private conversations.	Provision is made for new parents to be well briefed about playcentre policy and practice, children learning through play, and the role of parents in the programme. Team members inform parents as they collect their children about their child's experiences during the session. There is ongoing communication about the children between home and centre.	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
CONTRIBUTION	Expanding children's understanding of the rights of themselves and others Adults spend time in listening and responding to children's concerns. They help children to consider other points of view and suggest strategies which enable children to play together happily and constructively. There is an effective approach for giving children the responsibility for managing taking turns. The adults work at ensuring that children feel good about themselves and comfortable about rejoining a group after an upset. Children's contributions to assist and help others are acknowledged and praised by adults.	The high adult/ child ratio and an age range from babies to nearly 5 years is conducive to children of different ages and stages learning from each other about give and take and responsibility. There is space, time, and opportunity for children to do their own thing as well as activities that require children to work co-operatively.	Parents contribute to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the programme. They come to know each others' children well and are comfortable to take responsibility for them during the session. They support each other in guiding children's behaviour and are understanding of the demands on young parents. Their ideas for the programme are welcomed.	

The "Taniwha" teaching story in action focuses on arrival time. The abbreviated key elements of the centre teaching stories are presented in bold under each Strand of Te Whāriki.

Arrival Time at "Taniwha" Playcentre Starter Group: A "Taniwha" Teaching Story in Action

BELONGING Affirming the value of parents and children working and learning together	Over 40 minutes Jane's major focus is on welcoming parents and children. She greets them warmly and shows a friendly interest in each family group. New parents are put at their ease and encouraged to explore the centre, as well as being shown the baby changing and sleeping places. Children and parents who have attended some sessions already are welcomed by name and Jane has a special comment for them. Susan reinforces all this by informing the new parents in an informal and unhurried discussion about playcentre. Both she and Jane respond comfortably to parent queries or comments.
WELLBEING Enhancing children's feelings of personal worth, confidence, and self-respect	Parents and children are treated with respect and as individuals. Children who have been attending for some time are confident to find what they wish to do. Parents stay for the session which provides their children with a sense of security. It is reassuring for the parents to see their children playing happily.
EXPLORATION Inviting children to explore ideas about personal relationships as well as discovering the natural and physical world	Parents are encouraged to explore the centre. Jane provides ice, gloop, and blowing bubbles, activities which may be unfamiliar to the children and parents.
COMMUNICATION Encouraging children's expression of their feelings and ideas	Jane communicates effectively, with parents and children with expression and—frequently—fun. She conveys a sense of enjoyment in the children and the centre. She manages to maintain communication even when preparing play materials and provides information e.g. about making gloop and how it is used. Susan informs the new parents about playcentre in a setting that is comfortable and relaxed for them and their children.
CONTRIBUTION Expanding children's understanding of the rights of themselves and others	

A "Taniwha" Playcentre Context Story: Arrival time at starter group.

This session, held one morning a week, is for new parents and their babies and toddlers. There is one staff member, "Jane" with nine parents and their children.

Jane has arrived before 9am to set up the centre and has a few more materials to prepare. The usual activities are available, including dough, sand, swings, a mobile climbing frame, large soft cubes, mattresses, paints, gloop, large blocks of ice in a tub, water for washing dishes, blocks, books.

9.20am Two mothers and their young babies (5 and 6 months) enter. Jane welcomes them: "Ah, two new faces. I'm Jane."

Mothers: "I'm Clara" and "I'm Jess".

Jane: "Do you know anything about playcentre?"

Mothers: "Not really". Jane tells them about the information officer, "Susan" shortly arriving to put them in the picture about playcentre. She enquires about their babies' names and ages, and invites Clara and Jess to move about and look at the centre. She is warm and friendly.

Example

9.25am "Kathy" arrives with her son. She is a team member on another day but likes to come to this session with her little son so that he can enjoy time with a smaller group. Jane says "How are you, Kathy? I haven't seen you for a while?" Kathy smiles and responds and soon helps by sorting out dry paintings and putting them in the children's "cubbies". Her son knows the centre well and goes his own independent way.

Jane chats to Clara and Jess as she mixes the gloop, explaining what it is and asks them where they live and how they heard about the centre. She tells them where the baby changing table is.

9.30am mother "Kitty" arrives with her son, "Sam" and her baby. Jane kneels and says, "Hi, Sam". He runs to her with glee and she helps him take off his jacket. She says to Kitty "Have a wee look around, make yourself at home. I know Sam will." She shows Kitty where the baby sleep room is.

9.34am "Susan", the information officer, arrives with three children. Jane smiles and says "Hello, En famille!" She welcomes each child by name and introduces Susan to the three new mothers who are talking together, with their babies lying happily on the soft cubes. Sam goes off to play with the three older children.

Susan sits beside the new mothers and talks with them about playcentre and answers their queries.

9.38 am "Josie" arrives carrying her 1-year-old son. Jane is sitting at the gloop table: "Hi, Josie, how are you? Did you enjoy yourself last night? How's the wee lad?" They chat.

9.40am "Gloria" arrives with her daughter, Ann, and her baby in a car seat. Jane welcomes them by name. Gloria is familiar with the centre and finds an apron for Ann who immediately starts exploring the melting ice.

9.42am "Avis" arrives with son "Wally". Jane squats beside him: "Hello, Wally, how are you?" and talks with Avis. Gloria and Avis are soon talking together. A toddler drops a large lump of gloop on the floor near them and Avis scoops it up and returns it to the table.

9.50am A father, "George", arrives with his son. Jane is busy in the kitchen area. The boy stands and surveys the centre. George picks him up and carries him over to Jane, who greets them. They chat as she prepares bubble mixture. They all sit down at a table. Jane blows some bubbles to which nearby children react with delight.

9.52am The last mother arrives with her daughter. Jane greets them from the table.

Susan gives the new mothers the playcentre's information sheet and an Association flyer as well as her home phone number. At 10.30am she departs with the three older children. Jane tells them about the playcentre shop and its discount vouchers which she has placed in each family's "pocket" near the entrance to the centre.

Jane has managed to greet all parents and children individually and make them welcome. She has a lot of energy, an outgoing, friendly manner, and a sense of fun. The children have been happily exploring the activities or staying comfortably near their parents.

These excerpts of observations focus on the context of arrival time.

Centre 4

"EVENTS"

Description of "Events" Community Creche

"Events" community creche operates in a community hall. There is a very large open space for the play programme and a well-equipped outdoor area. In bad weather another hall in the building is used for vigorous play. The community served by the creche, a parent co-operative, is described as mainly middle class. There is a small number of families enrolled of varied ethnicity. There are a supervisor and four staff as well as a student from overseas who is working in the creche for 6 months. There have been up to 25 families represented on the management committee at any one time.

The creche operates sessions every day from 8.30 am–12 noon and from 12.15 pm–2.30 pm. There are approximately 80 children on the roll with a morning group of 21 and an afternoon group of seven children. There are three staff on duty each morning and two on each afternoon session. Two parent helpers are rostered for each morning session. The criterion for starting creche is that the child must be able to walk. Children can attend until they are 5 years old.

Learning and Teaching Stories

One learning story was constructed from the observational records and analyses and focuses on a girl aged 15 months. A teaching story focuses on the supervisor "B" settling and comforting children, also constructed from the observational records and analyses. There is also a context story of morning tea time which illustrates the centre's overall teaching story in action.

This is the girl "Esther's" Learning Story:

“Esther’s” Morning Creche Learning Story

BELONGING Finding something of interest here	Esther appears confident and happy at creche. During the morning she spent time both indoors and outdoors, exploring the environment. She shows interest and pleasure in her discoveries, fitting in comfortably with the centre’s routines and events. She displays a good understanding of how the equipment and materials can be used. Esther is at ease in seeking and receiving assistance from adults. Her interactions are predominantly with adults.
WELLBEING Being involved	Throughout the session Esther has been involved in many different activities, some fleetingly but others being given her focused attention. She chooses these independently needing no encouragement from adults. She explores in an unhurried and purposeful way. Her play is solitary but she is not disturbed by nearby children.
EXPLORATION Engaging with challenge and persisting when difficulties arise	Esther’s main interests indicate a trajectory schema as she moves her body and things through space in different situations. She is active in her explorations: climbing, rocking, sliding, balancing, pushing, fitting, jumping, and banging. She knows that equipment and materials have a place. She shows persistence in trying out activities that interest and challenge her.
COMMUNICATION Expressing a point of view	Esther’s verbal communications are confident and happy. Although she has no recognisable words she communicates clearly in her own special language or with smiles, laughter, or gestures. She can watch, imitate, and take turns with adults. She showed she can take the lead in the latter interaction. She clearly expresses affection.
CONTRIBUTION Taking responsibility	She shows this by finding her way to the toilet, to wash hands, to a seat at the morning tea table as well as eating independently and in “helping” to tidy up.

Observational Transcript Excerpts: Esther, aged 15 months at morning creche.

8.45 am E explores the centre for the first 20 minutes, moving from one area to another: at the dough table with adult M, then at duplo with adult C, next to the sawdust trough, placing her duplo car on the ground beside her and peeping into the trough, moving to the rocking horses, attempts to mount one and adult M helps her on. Next she goes to the tea table in the family play area and stirs a spoon in a cup. She comes to a curtained hiding place near me and needs me to give her a little help to find the gap in the curtain so that she can enter for a minute. She picks up a music shaker and a wooden clave, stands by the mini trampoline and jigs up and down, then walks up the car ramp by the blocks and watches a boy playing with the blocks. E moves back to the musical instruments, climbs on to the trampoline holding a small shaker and stands. Adult C holds her hands, says “jump” and helps her go up and down. Off again, banging with a drumstick, walks up the ramp again, then over to the carpentry bench and pulls the handle of a clamp.

I see her next on adult B’s knee. He is rocking her and beating a drum. She moves to the rocking horse, he helps her on. She tries to rock by herself but needs his assistance.

9.06am E climbs to the top of the indoor slide and stands as adult MI takes her photo, then slides down, she repeats this three times, chanting “da da da” in a confident voice, almost shouting, each time she climbs up. She looks across at me, a stranger, and laughs. There is a telephone on a child-sized mobile “vehicle” nearby. E picks it up and “talks” into it, then walks up the ramp leading to the kitchen, comes back again, sees another child on the slide, gives a happy shriek, climbs and slides again with more “da da da’s”.

9.17am Adult B shows her a drum. He is wearing a dragon hat. E gazes up at him and beats another drum. B beats his and she hits first hers and then his twice over, while B holds his drum steady for her. E says “Aah!”

Example

9.25am E is back on the slide with the same routine as above, three times. She moves on to the curtained hiding place, holding the frame and calling "Ee ee". Watches adult B bouncing on the trampoline, holding the hands of two children. All three are laughing. B then bounces with E and another child. He lifts each child off, saying "Jumpy jump, one, two, three, off". E returns to the sawdust trough, holding its edge to steady herself as she walks along the long, raised, wooden step which allows small children to reach into the trough. (For such a young child she has very good balance and confidence. I feel her predominant schema is trajectory.) Nearby is the toy oven. E lifts a large pot on top of the stove and pushes it back and forth.

9.45 am She is standing, observing the mobile structure which adult B has covered with a large curtain. He says in a loud voice, "OOOohh OOOohh!" and climbs into the "cave" to join some children. He pokes his head out and says "Hello" to E. She remains outside watching and listening. B holds a cardboard cylinder and speaks loudly through it—"OOOohh". After a pause, E picks up another cylinder and imitates B.

9.50am E is sitting on adult M's knee at the dough table. She claps her hands and M follows her lead. E repeats the clapping and gives M a kiss.

10.00am Tidy up time for morning tea. E watches adults and children tidying, then goes to the scissors storage board and lifts the scissors out, one by one, and then replaces them in the slots. (This might be her contribution to tidy up time). When B sings "Time to go and wash our hands" E follows the crowd. When she comes to the table, adult C helps her on to a chair. She listens to the adults and children singing, claps her hands and provides her own words, "ning ning". She eats well, reaches out to take a cracker from the plate without having to be helped. She is the last child to leave the table but does not seem to mind this.

10.35am Returns to the scissors rack and repeats her former actions. Then she moves to the carpentry bench. She plays with the clamp handle, dips into the container of nails taking some out, sees some on the floor, picks them up and puts them in the container. E pushes a hammer back and forth on the bench. She returns to the scissors. Beside them is a block of wood with holes in for storing pencils. E fits a couple of pencils into the holes.

10.44am E is now outside. She walks up a wooden plank leading to the fort platform and the slide. Slides down. She picks up two balls and tries to walk up the plank again. An adult helps her. She slides down holding one ball and starts to climb the plank, but the ball falls and rolls under the fort. E points to it and captures the attention of adult M who helps her retrieve it. E climbs the plank and slides down on her tummy. She then walks along the confidence course plank with help from M and then repeats it on her own. She picks up a large ball and rolls it to adult C. Next she throws it. She sits on a plank for a short time watching children and adults. (In her movements and requests for assistance she was indicating her awareness of her limits with balance.)

11.00am She has a brief rest sitting on M's knee. Soon she is off again up a ramp on to another deck where she pushes a small truck back and forth saying "na na na". She picks up a large ball and "throws" it to M, then returns to the fort and the slide. Next she peeps through a slit in the fence, shouts happily, on to the fort, down the slide, finds a spade in the grass and carries it to the sandpit. E is beginning to look a little tired. She bends over twice and does a Pooh Bear look through her legs (later, her mother told me this is a favourite trick).

11.30am She is inside on the slide. T, a boy, is there too. He is in front of her and she wants to climb up. She hits him softly and he moves on. She slides. Soon she moves to the family play area, picks up the iron and uses it on the ironing board. T has followed her. She reaches out for some plastic food on the table and T blocks her. She lifts a small chair and carries it to the lunch table. T takes it away. E goes to the train tracks and T follows. His manner has changed. He seems to want to be with her and play with her. With a smile he says, "It's your turn, then it's mine". E walks up the car ramp, T follows. She seems unaware that T appears to see her as the leader. She tosses toys out of the car box, picks up a lid and carries it to the sawdust trough, dips it in, takes it out and gives it to T who says, "No! Yuk!". When adult M says "wash hands" they go to the wash room, T behind E.

At the lunch table, E tries to climb on to a chair, squeals, and a parent helper assists her. She takes a half banana from her lunch box. It still has the skin on, she licks the cut end. Soon adult C notices and peels it for her. E eats and drinks well. When her mother arrives E smiles with pleasure. When it is time to leave she smiles and waves good-bye.

"Esther's"
Learning
Story is
based on
these
observations.

Example

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A teaching story, developed from observations of an adult "B" follows.

B's Settling and Comforting Teaching Stories

BELONGING	B's inclusion of several children in a story as he comforts "Bill" provides a sense of belonging for them all in a warm, secure situation.
WELLBEING	Children who find it hard to separate from their parents are helped by B giving them his reassuring attention in different ways: holding, diverting, reading stories. Children are learning to comfort one another and make reparation for hurts they have done.
EXPLORATION	Children have opportunities to explore ideas together and with an adult, arising from stories in a secure and unhurried setting.
COMMUNICATION	Discussions about how others are feeling are encouraging children to understand the effect of their actions on each other.
CONTRIBUTION	The centre's philosophy of ensuring that a child who upsets another is made aware of the effect this has had and that the behaviour is inappropriate is encouraging justice and caring for others. Children are learning an acceptable way for mending upsets. Children's ideas are listened to and acted on as instanced in Gay's suggestion for a story to settle Bill.

Observation of B At "Events" Community Creche: Settling and comforting children.

At morning tea time, B is seated, holding "Jack" on his lap. It is only Jack's second time here on his own. He is a toddler and is finding it hard to be on his own without his mother. All the staff are keeping a careful eye on him and are ready to comfort and hold and talk with him.

B picks Jack up and gives him high jumps. Jack smiles. B settles him at a table with pencil and paper. A girl seated beside him moves her chair and bumps him. He cries. There is a small bump on his head. B takes him to find some amica for the bump. He then takes Jack outside, lifts him up on to the fort platform and checks with staff member, C to keep an eye on him. Later in the session Jack appeared happy and involved.

A boy knocks toddler F over and moves on. B fetches him back and explains in a friendly, but firm way to him that F is little and sad and asks the boy to give her a cuddle, which he does without difficulty. F accepts the cuddle and goes about her play again.

Children are playing with the large duplo bricks. B is nearby. "Terry" approaches and pushes "John" over. B intervenes, explains to Terry why his behaviour is inappropriate and that it is better to ask rather than push because "Pushing has made John sad. Give him a little cuddle". Terry does so willingly. John accepts the cuddle and the two boys go on to play co-operatively.

B is comforting "Bill" who did not want his mother to leave. "Gay", a girl, says, "What about a story?" She fetches a book and she, Bill, as well as two more children, settle down beside B on large, comfortable cushions. B starts to read. The children nestle close to him and with his long arms and legs he is able to encompass them all in a cosy circle. Bill is calm and listening to the story.

B stops reading from time to time to ask questions which encourage the children to contribute to the story. Their discussions are quite lengthy.

(At this centre, stories are frequently used to help settle or comfort children. The practice of explaining why the behaviour is inappropriate to a child who hurts or upsets another and then asking him or her to give a cuddle is used by all the staff and works very well.)

These are excerpts of the observations on which "B's" teaching story is based.

Example

These are the overall, tabulated "centre teaching stories" for "Events" Community Creche:

**Events' Community Creche
"Centre Teaching Stories"**

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
BELONGING	Helping children and their parents towards a strong sense of belonging to the creche community Staff devote time to building warm relationships with children and parents, helping them to feel welcome and at home. A high priority is to settle children happily, giving comfort to those who have difficulty parting from their parents. Warm physical contact and sharing familiar stories are effective strategies. Staff are adept at being where they are needed. They accept and acknowledge children's intensity of feelings.	The environment is arranged so that children quickly learn their way about and know where to find what they want. There is much to engage their interest and invite them to investigate both indoors and out. Some of the play areas have obvious links with home activities. The atmosphere is friendly and relaxed. Routines of nappy changing, toileting, and washing hands are familiar and unhurried. The rituals associated with mealtimes emphasise that each child has a place and is valued.	Staff spend time, particularly at arrivals and departures talking with parents who are very interested in the centre. They introduce parents to each other so that they build up friendly relationships. Twenty-five families are represented on the management committee. Parents are welcome to stay as long as they wish. They often join their children at lunchtime and converse with them and the staff. Parents take their turn as helpers at each morning session. They are valued by the staff as members of the team.	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
WELLBEING	Addressing children's needs with caring concern Staff work at building trusting relationships with children. They are alert to children's interests and needs and any signs of distress. They acknowledge children's feelings and take their fears seriously. They take time to help children understand how their actions affect others, to learn to comfort one another and to support them in making amends. Staff show pleasure at the presence of each child and validate their importance as individuals and as members of the group. They celebrate children's achievements.	The arrangement of the environment encourages children to make their own choices and become involved. Areas are planned for children to experience success as well as challenge. Staff have given much thought and discussion in the provision and placing of activities to best meet the needs and interests of the children. There are places where children can reflect, observe others and take a rest as well as opportunities for energetic involvement. A cosy, comfortable book corner is frequently used as a secure place where adults and children share the pleasure of favourite stories.	Regular and open communication between staff and parents provides understanding of children's strengths, interests, and needs and how best to meet them. Together they work on joint strategies for children when the need arises. Staff inform parents about daily routines as well as how the session has been for the children.	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
EXPLORATION	Encouraging children to engage with challenge and make their own discoveries Staffs' knowledge and understanding of the children is reflected in careful planning of the environment and how they operate as a team in fostering children's explorations and discoveries. They respond to children's queries and work with them to solve problems, with the frequent use of open-ended questions. When they detect a child's schema they endeavour to support and enrich it. They spend time helping children to gain confidence and control of their bodies. They view toddlers' cruising curiosity and investigation positively.	There is a rich range of resources and equipment which encourage exploration and experimentation. These are displayed at the right height, are easily accessible, and available to both toddlers and older children. There are opportunities for children to find ways of extending their fine and gross motor skills. The outdoor area provides challenges that encourage children to be adventurous with the knowledge that there are supportive adults at hand. In bad weather the upstairs hall is used for energetic activity of a different kind. Staff add new resources, often made by themselves.	Staff use videos as an additional way to provide parents with information about their children's play and learning. They take time to prepare profiles and talk with parents about their children.	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
COMMUNICATION	Supporting children in expressing their feelings, needs, and interests Adults show genuine interest in their discussions with children. They listen carefully and often use open-ended questions to sustain the conversation. Before sharing food, children and staff sing together at table and children are invited to choose songs. This is also a time when children experience songs and phrases in Maori. Staff talk with children about their creations and express delight at what they have made. Staff support children in their dramatic play which provides a vehicle for the expression of emotions.	Songs and phrases in Maori are a natural part of the programme. Intimate spaces provide opportunities for private and sustained conversations. The well-stocked book corner and its inviting cushions, highly valued by staff and children alike, is in steady use throughout each session. Equipment which stimulates imaginative fantasy play contributes to lively communication between children.	A parents' handbook provides full information about the creche, enrolling and settling children, parent liaison, and involvement. Staff informally provide parents with information about their children at the end of the session. Profiles are developed for more detailed sharing.	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<u><i>Centre Teaching Story</i></u> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
CONTRIBUTION	Affirming children as individuals while encouraging them to learn and play with others Staff emphasise the communal, family nature of the creche while affirming each child as special. This is especially evident at mealtimes. Staff model caring relationships, encourage fairness and concern for others, and provide children with ways of mending upsets. They help children to understand turn taking. Children confidently seek help from adults but also show they can help and comfort other children. Staff thank them for their efforts at contributing to the programme and showing consideration for others.	The environment is designed so that there are opportunities for children to play alone or alongside others as well as in co-operative ventures. Tidy up time allows children to share responsibility with adults in refreshing the play areas. There are plentiful supplies of equipment and materials so that the problems of sharing are not pressing. Certain items require the co-operation of two or more children.	Parents are seen as a vital part of the programme. Staff welcome and thank them publicly at morning tea time for their contribution. Children witness this appreciation of their parents. During the session parents see their children take responsibility for themselves and others as well as seeing staff supporting children to make amends when they have upset other children.	

For "Events" creche, a "Teaching Story in Action" was then constructed, focusing on the context of morning tea. The key components of the centre teaching story are summarised in the first column (in bold under each strand of Te Whāriki).

Morning Tea at "Events" Creche A Centre Teaching Story in Action

BELONGING Helping children and their parents towards a strong sense of belonging to the creche community	This gathering for morning tea brings staff, parent helpers, visitors, and children together. The sharing of songs, the acknowledgment of those present, the eating of food together at one long table brings a sense of community.
WELLBEING Addressing children's needs with caring concern	Staff help the youngest children to wash their hands while respecting the ability of older ones to manage by themselves. However, B reminds them of the need to do this. By taking the opportunity to state his pleasure at the presence of each child at the session, he validated their importance as individuals.
EXPLORATION Encouraging children to engage with challenge and make their own discoveries	
COMMUNICATION Supporting children in expressing their feelings, needs, and relationships	The sharing of food by both adults and children around a communal table provides time for talking and listening to each other. The unhurried atmosphere facilitates contributions from the children.
CONTRIBUTION Affirming children as individuals while encouraging them to learn to play together	B's appreciation of the contribution of the parent helpers is acknowledged publicly. The preparation for morning tea—tidying up, washing hands, being seated and suggesting songs as well as, at the end, returning cups to the tray—help children to become self sufficient. Giving thanks for food and those who prepared it assist children in appreciating the contribution of others.

Morning tea time at "Events" Community Creche.

At about 10am, B, the supervisor calls out "Tidy up time". Because of limitations of table top space, activities are cleared from three tables. Some of the children echo him. He makes a game of putting toy cars away and moves to other areas, encouraging children as he goes. The other staff and a parent helper also work with the children in tidying various areas of the centre. There is no compulsion for children to tidy. Some do this with relish while others continue to play. If children have built a construction it can remain. The aim is for the play areas to be inviting for children after morning tea.

B sings "Let us go and wash our hands" and the children start to go to the wash room. Staff accompany some of the very young ones and assist them with hand washing.

Three tables are pushed together to make one long table and sufficient chairs are placed around them to accommodate all the children. There are some special chairs for the very young children. As the children come back from the washroom and take a seat B and M, a staff member, start singing with gestures.

"The wheels on the bus go round and round", while helping little ones to their chairs.

This is the time for songs. It is part of the ritual for mealtimes. Children join in or listen. The older children know the words and actions of many of them. Maori songs are frequently sung. Children are invited to choose songs.

Yesterday B walked around the table, stopping at each chair and acknowledging each child by saying, "It's nice to see Sam here" and so on, for all the children.

These are excerpts of the observational records which contributed to the Centre Teaching Story in Action.

Today he says, " You have been playing so well, and I liked the way you helped tidy up, but I was disappointed that some children were slow to go and wash their hands. Why do we wash our hands before we eat our food and after we go to the toilet?" Some children call out " Germs". "Yes," says B and it's to stop us getting sick. It's very important".

The duty of one parent helper is to prepare the morning tea. It consists of water crackers with butter, alone or with vegemite, milk arrowroot biscuits and lastly, apple and orange segments. There is water to drink. Before the children start to eat they sing a thank you song for their food and the people who prepared it.

B introduces the parent helpers and any visitors and says how good it is to have them present. He links the parent helpers, by name, to their children.

Parents and staff sit and talk with the children, It is a social time with much conversation between adults and children and between children themselves. The younger ones tend to listen as they eat.

Example

As children finish eating they are free to return to their play. Most remember to put their cups on a tray. Others are given a friendly reminder.

Centre 5 **"CROISSANT"**

Description of "Croissant" Childcare Centre

"Croissant" is an all-day, work-based, purpose-built centre that is situated on the ground floor of an office-block building. There is an entrance way with lockers, a sign-in table and parent noticeboard and an office which opens off the entrance way. There is a large open room which has a kitchen, laundry, and staff toilet and opens out on to a verandah with steps down to the outside play area. A second room (for the under-2s) has two adjoining sleep rooms and beyond is the children's bathroom/toilet/changing room.

The centre serves 22 children of mainly middle class employees of some mixed ethnic background, Pakeha, Māori, Chinese, Indian, Lebanese, and others. The centre is licensed for under- and over-2s and six staff. There is a separate space/room for under-2s, but they join in with over-2s for lunch and other group activities from time to time. Most children are cared for on a full-time basis; for some parents selected days are regularly used. There are no children attending on a casual basis.

The centre is managed by a committee of six parent representatives (elected by all parents), the Head Teacher, and one staff representative.

Learning and Teaching Stories

A learning story was constructed for "Rama" an Indian girl aged 2 years 4 months. The teaching story focuses on "N", a teacher in the under-2s area. An overall centre teaching story in action was developed from observations of a teacher "H" and a child "Katy", in the context of a literacy-related "happening".

This is "Rama's" Learning Story:

“Rama’s” Learning Story at “Croissant” Centre

BELONGING Finding something of interest here	Rama appears very at ease with the centre and its activities as evidenced by the range of activities she engaged in during the observation—both indoors and outdoors. She feels comfortable with, seeks out and interacts with others, particularly Koro, and initiates contact with all the adults.
WELLBEING Being involved	Rama appears happy and engaged throughout. Even when she has a fall she picked herself up and launches into another activity (inside) threading beads. She goes to get her own drinking water when thirsty, helps the teacher with lunch preparations. She knows and fits in well with all routines for eating/lunch, bathroom/toileting, handwashing.
EXPLORATION Engaging with challenge and persisting when difficulties arise	Rama persisted with her rock and log painting despite the difficulties of position and the paint running. She fed the birds and followed up getting more bread, she returned to her painting, put energy into her dots and lines on the chalk easel, the threading of beads, her sandpit activities, and her imaginative play.
COMMUNICATION Expressing a point of view	Rama made comments on all the activities (self-talk as well as with/for others). She initiated conversations with adults, and worked through tasks like comparing her beads, the length of the string, working out verbally the threading techniques as she went, and sought assistance.
CONTRIBUTION Taking responsibility	Rama helped the teacher to set up the easel for painting and chalk writing. She helps with lunch preparation/dish drying, getting bread for the birds, and taking things to the under-2s.

“Rama” female Indian child 2 years 4 months. Learning story 1.

The over-2s are outdoors where painting/easel has been set up and children are feeding the birds. Rama moves indoors later in the observation.

10.20am Rama walks down the stairs to the outdoor play area with teacher. She is helping the teacher to set up the painting easel. “How shall we do this?” says the teacher. Rama is diverted to another teacher who has given out some bread to feed the birds. Teacher decides that children can paint some logs. Rama comes back to the easel and gets a brush from the orange paint pot and paints lines along one of the logs. Teacher moves the easel closer to the logs and Rama changes to green paint, then back to orange on to the easel and on to the logs. Rama watches other children painting a rock (shifted over by teacher to beside the logs). Rama then starts painting the rock, and the paper placed under the rock catches the drips. Rama continues to paint, crouching down by the rock “I made paint” says Rama. She uses bright red then green paint all over the log with definite strokes. Rama spreads the paint all over the rock and down the sides.

Rama sees the other children feeding the birds and goes to find some bread. Teacher says “What a great job Rama”. Rama takes crust of bread out of the bread bag, places it by the fence. “I just feed birds” as she lays down bread—offers another piece of bread to Koro (Māori boy, 2 years 6 months) who throws it over the fence. “Wonder” says teacher” if we can move these tyres over here as she pushes them and a table as well over by the fence. Rama stands and watches and then says “Me, yes” when she sees the table. Rama climbs up on the table beside Koro and puts some bread over the fence, saying “Birdie, birdie, here”. Standing on tiptoes Rama breaks off small pieces and throws more bread “Hello bird”. Rama finishes up the bread. Koro gets more bread from inside and gets up again beside Rama. “Hi birdie” says Rama again. Koro eats the bread and Rama tries to eat a little but teacher sees and says “Birds will starve if you eat it”. Rama laughs. “Here birdie—I get lift up” as teacher lifts Rama up to get a better look over the fence to see if birds have come to feed. Rama wanders away but teacher lifts her up again so she can finish putting bread over the fence.

These are some of the observations from which the Learning Story was developed.

10.35am "Throw it" says teacher to Rama and she does until finished. "I get to kitchen for bread" says Rama. "No, enough please" says teacher. "I go to get another piece" says Rama. Teacher says "No, no more please". Rama comes up to me and says "My mummy says to my daddy Rama is boss".

Rama goes back to the easel to paint. Teacher says "There is no paper on the easel today—we are painting the logs and the rocks". Rama goes to the other side of the easel to use the chalks and the chalkboard. Rama starts to draw lines. Koro joins her. Rama prefers to use her left hand. "I got lots of many chalks" says Rama, drawing, using both hands and one chalk in each hand. Teacher gets duster and shows Rama and Koro how they can use it when they finish drawing OK? Rama uses duster in long definite strokes to clean off her work on the blackboard/easel. Rama takes all the chalks off the ledge but Koro pulls one off her. Koro grabs the duster and rubs off Rama's lines she has drawn. Teacher says to Koro that Rama doesn't want her work rubbed off right now. Rama continues with white chalk drawing lines and circles. "Good circles" says teacher as Rama continues lines and circles, then definite dots. "My turn now" says M. "What's happening?" —T. "They all screaming" says Rama continuing to draw dots and lines on the chalkboard. "Don't" says Koro beside her but she keeps going. "Me help you" Rama says to Koro. The 3 children by the easel keep chanting and Rama is jumping up and down. Rama is being squashed by M. Teacher asks Rama and Koro to give M and N a turn at the chalkboard. "Just finish quickly now and you go into something else". Teacher gently moves Rama away. "What shall we do now?" "I want to go inside for bread." "OK go and ask". Koro pushes past Rama, she falls over and cries: "You can go too, Rama" says Teacher.

(Rama is now inside the large playground). Rama and Koro decide to stay inside and do threading of beads which are set out on trays on a small table. Rama sits, still sobbing quietly from her fall but now concentrating on her threading. Koro sitting across the table leans over Rama and takes some beads from her tray. Rama reaches over to Koro's tray and takes some from him. Rama watches teacher holding up a dirty cloth from cleaning paint off the glass window in the foyer. Koro goes away then comes back and starts building piles with the square beads and then pushing them over. "Leave the beads for me" says Rama, so Koro moves away. "Koro takes the beads from me, hey Koro" calls Rama to teacher while keeping on threading. Teacher comes over to help: "Oh you have a knot there, put the beads on the other end". "I do it now" says Rama as it gets easier to thread. "Yes, you can do it now" says teacher as she helps to push bead through to the other end. Teacher has her own thread and is threading beads at the same time but Rama's string has a bend in it. "I get another one" says Rama as she threads on an orange bead, but takes it off again and puts it on again—"Can I make it?" (into a necklace?) "Not ready yet" says teacher as she gets Rama to compare it with hers. "They going off" says Rama. "No" says teacher "you have a knot at the end". Teacher holds up Rama's string and takes some beads off. "Off or on, Rama, what do you want?" asks teacher. "I want the baby orange off". "You have to take all those beads off to get it" warns teacher. "We have to, I want to, pull it off." "There's more of that colour in the bucket" says teacher as she pulls over the bucket of beads. Rama chooses an orange bead out of the bucket. Teacher says "Push all these down so they don't fall off." Rama threads the orange bead through the "wrong end" of the thread, but it goes on as the hole in the bead is large enough. "Uh-oh it's stuck" says Rama. "Why!" says teacher "there's a knot there so start at that end".

"Woopsie" says Rama as she drops the whole thread to the ground. **Rama takes a red bead from the table and threads it on to the string. This time : "The same as you" Rama and teacher compare their strings of beads; "Yours is longer" says teacher. Rama sees head teacher and says: "Hey, teacher I got beads." "Did you put them all on?" asks head teacher. "Yes". "Bring them to me—up and down—I can share them with you". "My beads" says Rama and puts them on to the table. "Watch out they might all fall off" says teacher. One bead does and Rama bends down, picks it up and rethreads it. "I leave beads here and I go outside" says Rama.**

I am (outside again) Rama wanders over to the sandpit and Koro is dusting off some sand on a pallet beside the sandpit. Rama joins in. They wipe off all the sand together with the palms of their hands. Rama holds some sand in the palms of her hands and watches it as it falls through. Rama climbs into the sandpit and digs with a spoon. She fills a baking dish with sand and decorates it with sticks "Happy Birthday" she sings but Koro and M push it away from her. Teacher says "I am sad that you did that Koro". Koro is sorry and pats Rama's head. "You broke her cake". Koro and M put sand back and help Rama filling it with even more sand than it had before. "Thank you" says teacher. Rama puts a candle(stick) into her cake and puts it on the table. "I make some bread for me". M tries to put a funnel into Rama's cake but she does not want it in. She digs with a spoon and watches a baby with a trolley.

These are some of the observations from which the Learning Story was developed.

Example

Rama leaves the sandpit and goes up the stairs again into the big playroom inside to get some comfort. Head teacher is getting the lunch prepared. "Can I watch you?" Rama says to head teacher. Rama gets a drink from the water cooler "Are you having a drink—why?" says head teacher. "Because I am thirsty" says Rama. "Did D look after you last night?" asks head teacher. Rama climbs up on a chair in front of the bench and says "I can help". She wipes the bench for head teacher who has given her a cloth, she wobbles a bit on the chair. Head teacher hands her a teatowel. "I'll wash this and you can dry this lid—wipe off all the water". Rama does this slowly and carefully. "What we having?" asks Rama—finished. Rama pushes the lid back to head teacher. Rama says "What's this?" asks Rama "It's the tap to turn the water on and off. Are you ready to dry something else—how about the potato masher?" says head teacher. Rama wipes it then dips it back in the water, dries it. Head teacher asks her to put it by the lid. "There's only a pot and glasses left now, I think I will do those". "Yumme" says Rama when head teacher says "We are having cheese. Are you going to eat all your lunch today? It's S's day off today". Rama repeats "S's day off".

11.15pm "Take this over to the babies' side please" asks head teacher. Rama hops down off the chair and carries a plastic container to the under-2s "That's it, thank you" says head teacher as Rama climbs back up to the bench. "These things are glass now so you can't do those. Do Mum and Dad wash dishes at home?" "I play with teacher. My friend" says Rama and she takes the potato masher and says "Mash, mash". Head teacher repeats "Mash, mash. I am putting things away now". As head teacher puts things away she describes what she is doing. "Tired today? You are quiet—Look there's a story over there (in the library corner). Do you want to go over and listen?" Rama points to celery plant on the bench; "I like that". Head teacher says "Yes that's celery" and shows it to her, then brings over the kumara plant which is also on the bench. Teacher 2 comes in and talks to head teacher about lunch. Rama watches, listens.

11.20am Rama initiates talk about her mother. Teacher 2 asks Rama to take the chair she is standing on to the table for lunch. Rama does so and pushes it under the table. Rama calls "Hey, head teacher we over here—all done". Rama points to floor in block area and says "my pile" and points to the boxes where blocks go. Rama helps for a little while but then sits down by the box and sucks her thumb. Teacher 3 comes and sits down in the mat area. Rama comes and sits by teacher 3 in a group of 13 children. Koro sits beside Rama and keeps moving up to her and trying to get her to take her thumb out of her mouth. Two teachers now in circle. Teacher 3 does some action songs and rhymes, patting shoulders, hands up in the air. Rama follows all actions while keeping her thumb in her mouth until "hands on knees" and Rama stops sucking her thumb. "Who can reach their elbows?" asks teacher 3. Rama achieves this and then rubs legs, chin, eyes, tongue. Rama follows very carefully, nose, eyebrows. "I hold my fingers like a fish and wave them as I go through the water". When the discussion on the mat starts about the centre's fish which died, Rama sits quietly listening, sucking thumb again.

11.30am Rama looks at the big book on teacher's lap. Rama is sitting beside the teacher and she starts to pat her leg, then quietly clapping and squirming around, bending backwards—Rama looks at girl beside her. Children get sent to wash their hands for lunch. Teacher does this by choosing colours people are wearing. "Who has yellow on?—yes Rama you can now and wash your hands for lunch".

Rama at lunch 11.36. Comes back and sits quietly at the table. Talks to neighbour and claps hands while waiting to be served. Teacher pushes chair in. Rama sings then stops while head teacher says "Can I hear any tummies rumbling?" Rama keeps her eyes on teacher serving lunch; she says "Thanks" to head teacher. Rama joins in singing with others "thank you (head teacher) for cooking our lunch." Rama joins in as they all say a prayer (grace in Māori and English). Rama yawns as she says it. She gets given a plate of fish pie and she uses the spoon with her right hand and very carefully puts it in her mouth to see if it is too hot. (2 minutes' break)

11.45pm Rama is still eating quietly until all is finished. "Would you like some more Rama?" says teacher. "Yes please"—teacher goes to get more and Rama waits with hands on the table and legs swinging. "Whose was this?" says teacher as she brings back the plate—"Who wanted more?" Rama has changed her mind. Asked if she wants more and is offered fruit. Rama takes two pieces of apple, eats quietly, and watches another teacher feeding a baby beside her.

11.51am Rama is eating very slowly, just starting her second piece of apple. She is watching teacher talking to another under-2s about getting ready for their afternoon sleep. Rama when finished teacher says "Go into the bathroom". Rama continues to eat on her piece of apple, she finishes, gets up and goes to get water from the water cooler. "Good on you Rama, getting a drink?" says teacher 2. "Off you go (to the bathroom). Rama moves off to go to the bathroom.

These are some of the observations from which the Learning Story was developed.

The Teaching Story which follows focuses on observations of "N", a teacher in the under-2s area of the childcare centre.

A morning with the Under-2s A "Croissant" Centre Teaching Story

BELONGING Knows and understands children's interests, needs, and strengths	The centre has developed routines which are followed for welcoming parents, and attending to the ongoing physical and emotional needs of the children. There are lots of cuddles, the children are given ongoing encouragement to walk, play with toys, books, balls, sliding and practising other motor and language skills.
WELLBEING Addresses children's needs with caring concern	"N" is very close and caring in terms of changing nappies, feeding, cuddling, responding verbally and non-verbally, putting on of sunblock for outside activities, playing peek-a-boo, checking if children are hot/cold, dealing with runny noses, ointment application and so forth.
EXPLORATION Expands children's horizons by creating challenges and encouraging creativity	"N" sets up toys, books, appropriate equipment and learning experiences that children engage in readily including outside play with swings, balls, trolleys, negotiating the steps to outside, singing, sliding. The teachers emphasised investigating the flowers and soil in the garden—touching, observing. "N" engaged babies in the imaginative play of "putting their babies to bed".
COMMUNICATION Invites communication and expression of children's feelings	"N" takes every opportunity to engage in verbal and non-verbal interaction whatever the activity, engaging in the children's imaginative play. "N" continued talking about (and with children) the soil: tactile stimulation and responses, verbalising actions.
CONTRIBUTION Supports children's self-help and co-operative skills	The children were encouraged to put the soil back, "clean their hands", to weed the garden, take out the lumps of dirt and put them back. "N" showed children how to touch people gently and to be considerate of others.

"N", teacher in under-2s : Teaching story.

Morning in the under-2s area. Babies have just moved into their own space from general area of the centre.

Teacher 1 talks to N about the broken parts to a toy as she moves into the under-2s area. N rescues a baby off the top of the plastic slide and carries her around while she watches the others. Teacher 1 speaks to N about the two over-2 helpers who will have to leave area soon. N shifts the plastic slide and talks to a baby sliding down it. N looks across at two others, talks to Mum as she arrives with a tiny baby. N talks to mum and baby while picking up another child and waves to further child over the barrier.

N talks to teacher about another child—holds and cuddles two, now one baby says "gone wee-wee" and tries to take off her pants. N laughs as she has just been changed. Child comes back to N but when N says "I will change you"—she laughs and runs away. N crawls around on floor after baby. Helps another to get on slide. Starts to wipe up wet patch on carpet by slide while watching the children. Plays peek-a-boo then she goes back to the kitchen to get morning tea—children go "tea". N keeps repeating, "tea" as she goes out to get mugs etc, brings back chairs and then goes back to the kitchen (still visible).

9.11am The head teacher is left to supervise and to get table and chairs ready. N is in the kitchen opening packets of biscuits, getting drinks ready, collects the bibs and brings them back and gives them to head teacher. Then N helps get six children on to chairs and putting bibs on. N talks to them as they are getting ready. When all bibs are on they each get a biscuit. N gives out cups of water/milk to each child.

N tells head teacher about previously moving the table to a different place and how the children kept protesting. N goes on a tea break (9.18am as she started at 7.30am). N comes back at (9.30) and starts to set up and put out toys on to the small outside balcony. Some balls, some wheeled toys and head teacher gets blocks—they discuss where these are (as there are different types and how they get mixed up). N sits out on the balcony with four toddlers. N checks the barrier across the end of the balcony, rolls the balls, does up shoe laces, plays peek-a-boo with M. Then they all start to look at each other in the glass reflections of the door. N watches one child playing with a small crate and makes sure that the door stays back while she is bending over.

They decide that sunblock is needed. N gets sunblock and applies to all toddlers on the balcony—they can all see the over-2s playing outside. N rubs some sunblock on the over-2s as well who lean over the fence and ask N to put some on them. N starts taking off jumpers but one child doesn't like it and protests for a while. N takes them out along the balcony through the gate and into the play area and the sandpit.

9.43am N is outside with the under-2s. N picks up a child who has just fallen down low slide and comforts her. N turns their play into a running race with two of the under-2s bouncing balls on the grass, talking, lifting them up and down. She lifts the little one who fell—a little bit of blood is on her nose and it's also runny. N keeps an eye on the others while she wipes A's nose, kisses her and then A tries to wipe her own nose. N helps her then helps her to put the used tissue into the rubbish bag outside.

10.00am N goes inside to get some ointment for A she comes back and puts some on A's nose. Looks around the under-2s and then bends down with two children looking at flowers which have been planted in two tyres. N touches the earth with A and L, taking it out carefully, getting their hands dirty "Oh it tickles" says N. "Now clean your hands" she says as she rubs her hands together. A and L copy. They stroke the soil around the flowers. A says "dirt" and N repeats and then says: "Look at the different colours of dirt." N holds some dirt in her hands while L and A dust it off her hand little by little.

Head teacher comes over and tells N she will move the blue rubber mat out of the shed and place it over by the steps (to soften any child's landing). N still with A and L looking at flowers. L is touching A, and N says "Now be gentle with A". N puts her hand over L's and says "Touch like this". Then N jumps up to pick up N (baby) who has been knocked over by K's trolley. The baby is fine, she is not crying. N goes back the children by the flowers and continues to pull the weeds "Take the weeds out so the plants can grow" says N. "So that they will grow right up to the clouds" says Katy. "Yes, taller than me" says N. "What did you find?" says N as A has dug up a shell. N picks up lumps of dirt and places them on the edge of the tyre. L breaks them up and puts them back into the flowers.

N notices N (Baby) trying to get a trolley out. She goes over as N toddles over to the shade and N watches the baby go down. N takes the trolley back down to the under-2s area (outside space). She walks around watching toddlers C and N. Helps C play with the ball—throwing hand over hand, touching and rolling the ball. Walks with C to get ball. Rama comes over to play with ball by N. N watches her bounce as well as C and N who are walking around. Rama tells N something "important" up close and face-to-face about baby bears.

Rama invites N into the playhouse frame while she explains all the parts and they put a "rock" to "sleep". They discuss the best place to put it (there are four children in the space) They look around to see C and N. N winds up the bucket swing by twirling the ropes and shows Rama how when she lets go it spins. Rama discusses how a baby tiger could fall off the bucket swing. Rama asks N for help with the baby tiger (imaginary). N says: "Hold on please while I get baby N" who is sliding down backwards on the wide metal slide. N helps two toddlers to go up the two stairs on to the decking.

"How's the baby tiger?" N asks Rama. "It's got to go up again another slide" says Rama. "Oh another slide" says N. "Help me with my baby tiger, N" asks Rama. "Where is it?" asks N. "It's under the trees". "Do you want me to put the baby tiger on the trolley?" says N. Rama goes and gets her "tiger" and brings it back to the trolley. Together they push the trolley up together and on to the deck. N helps another child up the metal slide. Rama tells N that the [baby tiger] has to go to the hospital—N asks "Who has to go to hospital?" They all move over near the sandpit. N walks around that area watching the children.

10.15am N helps children as they walk over the logs. "Can you hear A calling your name?" says the child beside her. "Oh well he will have to talk louder won't he?" Head teacher talks to N about planting some sweet peas and then she goes for a break. N takes over watching the children climbing over the plastic cubes beside the steps. L comes to show N lumps of dirt—N holds them on the palm of her hand. In amongst the dirt is a small worm. A child in cube calls "Knock, knock". N says "Who's there? Come and see what I have in my hand here now". Five children gather around. A comes up to N for a cuddle, says "hands" and N opens her hands with some lumps of dirt. L wants lumps too and N encourages L to share. N helps the children in the cube to put on sunhats again. Another teacher

These are the observations on which the Teaching Story was based.

Example

comes to tell N about a boy who has buried himself in the sandpit up to his waist. N goes over as one girl climbs the tree. "I'm higher than you N" says Rama. "Yes you are" N says while she hugs another child. N tickles and cuddles another as they also cling on to her. N starts jumping and two children start copying as well as making a "woooing" sound then they call out "up" and "down", "jump". They grab a blue piece of piping and N picks it up and listens into one end of the pipe and then talks into it. She then listens while E talks into the other end.

N goes behind the bushes saying "bye" and two toddlers follow, laughing as she comes out again from the bushes. M falls over on the steps and N rushes over but M is smiling and after a cuddle M struggles to get down and waddle away. N goes back to talk to the toddlers by the motorbike (half buried in the playground as a piece of equipment).

10.25am N runs around the tree and a boy cries out from a tree on the other side of the yard. He is stuck up there as his gumboot is wedged between two branches. N gets him out and down then returns to the toddlers asking "What's that?" Another child gets stuck in a tyre. N helps him out very slowly while he is crying but once he is out he climbs back in again. N watches baby N come down the five steps on her bottom; N is encouraging her: "Yeah!" When the baby reaches the bottom of the steps she blows raspberries at N and then toddles away.

Rama comes back to N with her "baby tiger". "Is she all right?" says N. "Yes she had a bath".

"Oh good." "Uh-oh" says N and the children copy her "uh-uh!". Two boys (teacher and Katy) are wanting to have one trolley between them, so N goes over to sort it out. N asks each boy to say what he wants and doesn't want, each have a turn. Teacher asks Katy to get off and teacher rushes off with the trolley. Katy runs away happily.

Two toddlers come up and touch N—one pulls her necklace, the other cuddles into her and they all cuddle up together. N puts M's hand gently on to baby N to encourage her to touch M gently. N stamps her feet on the decking and N and A copy. N runs over the sandpit and back again—children follow. "I need to have a rest now, I'm huffing and puffing" says N as she sits down on the tyres. Two toddlers sitting inside the tyres. N starts to "beat" on tyre with hands, children inside the tyre copy. N is challenged to another race with them.

10.43am Head teacher comes and gives N baby A's bottle, N puts bib on and sits feeding while watching others. Another child comes up for a cuddle, so N holds two children. N watches two others (N and M) cuddling. N is still sitting feeding A while watching M walking around and then falling over and then picking herself up, then playing with the zip on her overalls—N says "Zip, Zip". Rama comes up to talk to N, the baby finishes the bottle, Rama talks to N about her house. N moves over to the steps to watch two other toddlers crawling up the steps until they have reached the top. N "crawls" up after them, then comes back to A, takes off her bib and then they walk up steps together. T2 asks N if there are any more babies outside. "No" says N and goes into the kitchen, taking the bib off another baby.

10.55am N and head teacher take all the under-2s back into their area. On their way each baby picks up a doll from the dressing-up corner so each baby has a baby. N settles them down and shows them how to cuddle—"Shall we make a bed for the babies?" The children put the babies on a sheepskin rug. N gets a blanket to put over them "the babies go nigh-nigh". N models how to put them to bed "kiss nigh-nigh, shsh now babies go to sleep" says N. The children start to point to the eyes, mouth, nose etc on their babies and N repeats the words as they say them. N lies down by the babies and dolls and the children copy, although two crawl around kissing the other babies. N starts to cover everyone up and after a few minutes N says, "Time to go to sleep now". Some don't want to so N joins in again—she gets more pillows and blankets and spreads them out further. N says "Where is A?" who is under the blanket. M comes over for a cuddle. N rocks backwards and forwards and lies down again on the floor (11.08am).

The overall "Centre Teaching Stories" for "Croissant" Childcare Centre follow in tabulated form. As in the other centres, these are based on all of the observations, and were developed with reference to the NUD*IST analyses.

**“Croissant” Childcare Centre
Centre Teaching Stories**

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story Through “responsive, reciprocal, respectful” adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
BELONGING	Sharing a philosophy of teaching and leadership which provides a sense of belonging for all parents and children; valuing what children bring with them which is shared by all The teachers have built up positive relationships, based on a shared philosophy. Children’s views and needs are respected at all times and are modelled by how they relate to each other. They thank each day the person on lunch duty who prepared the meals, and helping one another is an important aspect. For example, older children help younger children.	Predictable and constant centres have been set up around the centre so children know where they have to go and what is required of them. Teachers prepared the resources, dressing up, puzzles, books, blocks that children can access easily or assist others. In the under-2s for example, family photos are placed lower down on the sleep room doorway so children can point to them through the day.	Family/parents and caregivers are greeted every day, time spent with them talking, catching up. Every child has a folio of work, achievements and observations which is shared during parent interviews held in rotation for every child. Parents very involved in management	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
WELLBEING	Calm and caring processes ensuring children are secure and healthy; respecting and involving parents at all times Adults and children communicate calmly and in a caring way to each other. Any distress is responded to immediately and in a loving way. Voice levels are kept low, even while situations are sorted through.	Areas and learning resources are set out for easy access both indoors and outdoors. Teachers make sure that each room or space has adequate supplies of materials and learning experiences, including the special setting up of water play and the routines associated with this. Teachers also ensure equipment, e.g., paints, chalks are used outside as well as inside.	Parents are welcomed. Mention is made in an inclusive way about cultural background of the children in what they are doing, what they are reading about.	
EXPLORATION	Providing a well-resourced environment for a diverse range of exploratory activities and experiences Teachers plan well in advance how each kind of learning experience relates back to Te Whāriki so they have shared agreement about the environment and resources and how this is to be achieved. Planning is displayed on wall chart. Teachers observe carefully how children engage in certain activities or with certain resources and they may then direct attention to new activities or make better use of present resources to encourage ongoing exploration.	Learning experiences are provided where children can explore, experiment, and interact with others. These are swings, large tables, plastic chairs and indoors: dressing-up corner, puzzles, library corner, blocks, writing corner, arts: painting, clay.	Through support from the parent committees on a daily and ongoing basis, the centre maintains a high level of resourcing, and improvements are being made on the environment, e.g., fundraising for an awning for outside area for summer so children can continue to make use of outdoor activities.	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
COMMUNICATION	Encouraging children to communicate with each other and adults in positive ways; adult modelling is also a feature Teachers model and extend vocabulary, questioning, and effective communication amongst themselves through organised schedules and routines and shared approaches. Teachers interact positively with each other and parents as they drop off or collect their children. Teachers "get down" alongside children communicating about and around their involvements.	Teachers provide books, puzzles, read to and with children; imitation, extension (and scaffolding) of language continues throughout the day in a range of situations. Language is directly linked with children's activities, building on them, enhancing them. An environment where questions are encouraged, expression of feelings and assertiveness has been created and is continued to be practised.	The teachers of the under-2s have family notebooks in which they write what the children have done each day, their milestones, their language and other details. Parents write back to teachers and include important home and language information, e.g., a Chinese parent wrote down some key words because she speaks her first language at home to her child. Teachers can therefore recognise and repeat some key phrases to the baby, understand the child's own vocalising.	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
CONTRIBUTION	Children contributing to all activities and experiences including help with younger children, building on and from children's own experiences; children involved in decisionmaking and planning Children are encouraged to create and recreate through fantasy play (dressing up, role play), create using blocks, sand boxes, balls, a range of co-operative activities. Teachers role model and interact with children to show how such co-operation can be achieved, how their contribution helps out.	Children are encouraged to help with duties around the centre. They self-select to help with lunches, carrying, tidying up, looking after others (such as being "special helpers" for the under-2s). Children are regularly asked their opinions about how things are working/not working and if they have any ideas, contributions to planning or making decisions about activities or routines.	Families are encouraged to contribute both materially and in terms of their time. Parents sometimes came down to share morning or afternoon teatimes or to take their children out for lunch. Easy access to parents permits ongoing contribution, and relationships build up very quickly because of this. The various ethnic backgrounds are reflected in some of the resources and also included within decisions, and sharing is encouraged at all times.	

Finally at Croissant Childcare Centre, a "Teaching Story in Action" was prepared, concentrating on the context of literacy-related learning and teaching.

Literacy Skills at Childcare: A "Croissant" Teaching Story in Action

Te Whāriki Strands BELONGING Sharing a philosophy of teaching and leadership which provides a sense of belonging for all parents and children; valuing what children bring with them which is shared by all	The teacher gathers the children around her in a small, sharing group. Her experiences of other cultures and values are included in discussion on "hot" countries, and appropriate clothing. Each child in turn is helped to spell out their name using letter cards. Each child praised for these efforts. The teacher makes connections with family/parent experiences of "hot" countries. She refers to a national flag they can see through the windows.
WELLBEING Calm and caring processes ensuring children are secure and healthy; respecting and involving parents at all times	The teacher assists children to access books, letter cards and charts, other free choice activities. She gets books from local library, sets up library corner, writing materials, alphabet cards and charts. The children are shown how to use them. The teacher scaffolds children's writing and letter recognition. Parents help to provide scrap paper/materials for writing/reading corner.
EXPLORATION Providing a well-resourced environment for a diverse range of exploratory activities and experiences	The teacher follows up individual children when they are given "free choice" after mat activity/discussion—she becomes involved with children writing and practising skills. Children are encouraged to follow up discussion/on the mat with related activities but not all do. The children's own interests dictate.
COMMUNICATION Encouraging children to communicate with each other and adults in positive ways; adult modelling is also a feature	The teacher develops questioning skills arising from pictures in selected books. Children ask questions and the teacher probes: "What do you think?" The teacher negotiates rules of the letter matching game. She plans a short discussion with book resources available, a series of sessions modelling the "discovery" of books, letter/word recognition, and early writing is encouraged. The teachers have consulted with parents of children who are 4½ and over to develop some school "readiness" skills.
CONTRIBUTION Children contributing to all activities and experiences including help with younger children, building on and from children's own experiences; children involved in decision making and planning	The teacher asks a child to help set up free choice activities, e.g., play dough and dominoes. The child does both unaided. The teacher apologises to the child for the delay in getting around to help him with a game. The teacher encourages the children to relate their own experiences and interests in relation to what is read.

The following two observational transcripts inform the summary of the teaching context of literacy skills.

1. H teacher with group of 4-year-olds, literacy skills

H has brought some books which they have read before but H is taking them through the books again. Children all interested in the pictures of Eskimos and the warm clothes they have to wear; H talks about going to the mountains and why we dress up warmly.

Ask E to find someone in the book in a hot place. When she finds them H asks why do you pick this one and they talk about the picture of Arabs in the desert on a camel—they sing about Alex the camel has four humps. Asks child to get atlas from the library corner—so they look at the yellow parts of the world map—hot places—like K's family is from. There is NZ. Everyone here lives in Wellington which is part of NZ.

Asks why do people wear these on your head—to cover your face from the sand. Katy talks about her costume from her mother's country. Asks B to find someone from India wearing the same clothes as Katy wears. Child asks to draw a picture of a volcano. H says I will show you how to draw a NZ flag—right B that's called a sari, yes, H shows them how to draw NZ flag (like a spiderweb says one child). Yes and here are some stars (four of them like a cross). H points to a US flag as another flag with stars—and the same colours but it's not the NZ flag. Children then allowed to choose—some play with mobilo and B chooses to play with letter cards with H. H leaves the selection of books for children to read as well. At the table, H asks B if he wants to play with all of them—yes—that's a lot says H. H spreads all cards out on table face down and in rows following the shape of the round table. This is going to be such a long game, B repeats this to head teacher. He says he has three more to lay out. Is it just you and me today—everyone else is busy? H looks around to check on other children on the floor.

B has to turn two cards over to see if they match. She negotiates some rules of the game, and B agrees he matches up two Ds. H allows five turns to turn over cards, reinforcing (12.24am) which cards are matching. H turns to another child who needs to ask two other boys to help play with the mobilo. She helps him. One girl brings book to H and asks her about a picture in the book, what do you think?

Questioning and explaining about poor people in India—they don't have any money—maybe because there are no jobs. Lots and lots of countries have poor people. At the supermarket there are baskets that people can donate food. Topics range through to seat belts in cars and learning about staying in the car. Sometimes parents leave a baby in a car for short periods when they need to dash out. They talk about bombs in cars and the blowing up of cars, (12.31pm). Then a boy talks about Batman and how he forgot to take his car.

Katy comes to ask H to read the book "our clothes". What has this person got on his feet? B asks for attention to the letters game—but H keeps on reading. Rama's mum says goodbye and mum leaves—Rama is watching H and waiting to say something—Ben chimes in about waiting for the letter card story. C also asks for attention. H reads book about costumes they are wearing. H tells B to have an extra turn while he is waiting. They look at special clothes for occasions such as weddings in different countries across the world—asks questions relating to other children in the group and their experiences. H asks B to pack away cards. A dispute is on the mat over some cards. H apologises to B about being delayed; she gives him a choice of playing again or not and packing away. Goes back to read from the book on "houses". (12.41pm). H has spent focused time with five children since finishing books.

Shall we talk tomorrow about making a food bank (from book on housing). Child says no today—OK after afternoon tea. Goes back to mat and joins in block game—would you like to set up "playdough" says H.

Example

Observations in the text of literacy-related happenings (focus on the teacher).

2. "Katy", female child 4 years 8 months, Lebanese

Katy sitting on mat with seven other children, small group activity with teacher working on letter/word recognition. Katy is sitting quietly holding on to her feet and then says "a big S" as group is helping teacher sounds out letters of Katy's name and asks other children to help Katy to find other letters in her name.

Katy lines up letters as they are found. When name complete she smiles and holds on to letters. Collects them up as they move on to another person's name (12.50pm). Katy helps to find I for next person's name. A boy lunges in front of her but she continues to quietly sort through the letters, helping teacher and others. She makes another word by herself. Teacher asks them all to sit down but there is one letter missing so everyone stands up to see if it's on the floor. Teacher says sit down on mat again. Katy sits quietly right beside teacher.

Katy turns and looks at boy who is being taken to bed. Katy sits and watches the other noisy children again. Sits and watches teacher who asks another child to write their name—Katy asks if she can too. Teacher says "Yes" so she goes over and gets a piece of paper off the shelf, and sits down at the table with another girl and boy. L has to take medicine and then comes back to table. On tiptoes, Katy stands watching for a few seconds and then sits down. Watches teacher spelling out words for other two children. Katy sits and teacher asks to show her how to write Katy. She smiles but waits a few seconds before starting, picks up green felt and makes a mark a "k"—she watches Rama writing an "r". "Please pass me a pen" asks teacher and Katy does. Katy does a little "k"—that's a little "K" isn't it says teacher. She nods. Katy sits holding felt and top and sucks finger watching head teacher and teacher 2 and other children.

Katy does some more lines on her paper, bangs quietly with her fists and puffs out her cheeks. Makes an "I" on her paper and a dot. Watches Rama making "r" while teacher is helping. Has slowly written each letter of her name and then underlined it while stopping, watching. She re-dots her "I's" again. She goes "arrg" and then doodles under her name (1.13pm). Katy is chewing on her felt and watches teacher talking with another child at the table. Katy watches boy drawing picture of his dad. I am going to do words Katy says, and makes a mark—says "Teacher look—it's running out"—"Yes we need better felts—cause they are getting shorter". "This is K-K". "Yes", says teacher. Calls to teacher, folds paper and then goes and gets a new sheet of paper. Teacher asks how to do words with these letters—oh you want to make cards (like on the mat). Teacher shows her how to fold paper in quarters and then you have to cut it. She folds and unfolds—like that yes, open it up and you can cut along the lines. Katy does it. Gets scissors and cuts one quarter, then another and another until she has four pieces of paper.

Katy stands and watches teacher explain a boy's picture to teacher 2. Katy chooses another felt—purple and she writes N on one piece of paper and picks up another two pieces. Katy writes a banana shape on another piece of paper. She stops and watches then collects up all the pieces of paper and puts them in the rubbish. "Did you get your cards cut?" asks teacher. "No they were wrong". "Are you going to do it again?" "No"—Mum—teacher. Katy says did you say that girl dies—yes diana—princess—like diamond.

Katy gets a large piece of paper and folds it down the middle she cuts around the edge, did you watch Diana—yes—is she beautiful yes—she is special—come and sit down—Katy. Sits and teacher helps her to fold and cut paper, first in half. She cuts right across paper while teacher holds it. Fold again and then cut again. Which she does, then cuts it again "Then again" says Katy. Katy cuts along half way and considers cutting at right angles but changes mind—what do we do now—fold over? And she cuts, now she has four cards and she folds again. Teacher approves and cuts again. She keeps folding in half and cutting getting down to 16ths. Teacher says great—you have made some lovely cards, keep going—"This for my home" says Katy—"Yes you can take them home" says teacher. Teacher—like that as she keeps folding. Katy points and touches T's arm at what she is doing. Katy makes a little pile of her "cards" (1.45pm).

Katy's folding and cutting and placing each piece cut on to her pile which sits on the table between herself and teacher. She continues as teacher reads story to others and she quietly works on. Katy pats her pile of cards and then cuts last two. How's it going—wow all finished—what are you going to do with them—Katy asks teacher. Picks up cards and straightens them—do you want the letters written on the cards—get the pen—draw an A with brown felt. She does it and then does another a—capital and small. Now a different colour for the next letter? Katy stops and puts finger into ear, rubbing, watching others then chooses red felt: teacher what is after a-b- she sings a, b, c, d, e, (song) and another b she says as she writes.

Context observations:
Literacy-related events
(focus on the child)

Katy chooses a gold felt and makes an "h", "or a C" do you want the twink—teacher goes and gets it—what do you want says Rama? Katy is looking at the alphabet chart and saying letters. Twinks out "h" on her card, follows lines very carefully—I wait until it dries—put this in the office she says to head teacher—leave it for later in case you need it. Head teacher goes over and helps to do "c's" big "C" and little "c". Looks at book head teacher is reading to another boy. Rama is starting to copy Katy who has stopped to listen to story.

Comments/Reflections/Feedback

During a follow-up meeting with staff, there was unanimous agreement about the descriptor of the centre and the summary statements made under each of the categories:

Belonging
Wellbeing
Exploration
Communication
Contribution.

The teachers also emphasised the need for all centres to have an evaluation framework which was not only clear but achievable. They queried the levels of expectations which would exist about data gathering and the time requirements to observe and complete this kind of assessment and evaluation. The teachers were very sure that observation by peers would be the main way of gathering data, definitely not "outsiders". They expressed a desire to be in proposed Phase three, which is to involve trialling Phase two.

Centre 6 "WEKA"

Description of "Weka" Kindergarten

"Weka" kindergarten is a state-funded, sessional kindergarten. The building is purpose built (from the start, designed and intended as a kindergarten). It is sited next door to the local primary school. The school "field" is shared, although the kindergarten children do not have free access to it. The community served by the kindergarten is well established; it is mixed socioeconomically and ethnically. The teachers are "local". The kindergarten is managed by an Association.

There are three teachers at each session, with a ratio of one to 13/14 teachers to children. The number of children attending is 43 in the morning and 43 in the afternoon, with a total of 86 children. The group size is therefore 43 at both the morning and the afternoon sessions.

Learning and Teaching Stories

A learning story was constructed, focusing on "Helen", a part Samoan girl aged 4 years. The teaching story focuses on "S", interacting with children in an outdoor setting. A centre teaching story in action is presented in the context of a musical "happening".

This is "Helen's" Learning Story:

“Helen’s” Screen Printing Learning Story

BELONGING	Helen is intrigued by the screen printing L has set up at a nearby table. Although she is at the painting easels her attention is drawn to L. A quiet observer, Helen notices how L is introducing the activity to the children and interested parents. She chooses other things to do nearby and passes the table a few times. She is in no hurry and finishes her self-appointed creative tasks although she does glance up very often to check out what is going on. The screen printing table is crowded with a queue. Too many children for Helen’s comfort—she knows herself.
WELLBEING	Helen has a definite settling-in routine which she follows every morning. She always starts at the painting easels which is a good place from which to see what else is going on. From here she chooses where to go. At the next table is always a teacher. L includes her in a conversation about her painting. Although Helen rarely answers verbally, she smiles and responds to L’s suggestions in her painting. She appears secure and comfortable and other children do greet her as they pass by. Only when the screen printing table is unused much later in the morning does Helen go to try out what is offered.
EXPLORATION	Accepting adult help, Helen begins to draw a picture for a screen printing. She has watched and waited for this opportunity for almost 2 hours and when she hasn’t been outside, she has positioned herself at every table or activity around the screen printing. Her time has come. S explains to Helen that she has to cut out her picture but the scissors Helen picks are very stiff. She perseveres with them and finishes quickly because more children have come to the table. In the meantime the screen printing frames have all been taken. She circles the table waiting for a space and once there is one, proceeds to scoop the paint on until the screen is well covered. She uses the scraper and completes the process by lifting the screen and peeling off her stencil.
COMMUNICATION	Helen does not often communicate verbally. She works and plays alone for long periods of time. However, she is very attuned to the conversations around her. At the screen printing, a group of girls are waiting to have a turn. They obliquely comment to one another to try to hurry Helen along. They mutter to themselves and Helen responds by adding yet another colour to her screen. One girl comments that she hopes there will be enough paint left. Helen empties the small remains of the pot on to her screen. She is quietly asserting herself and her right to be there. S, the teacher, remarks on the effective work of art and Helen looks proud of herself. She remains silent.
CONTRIBUTION	Helen is aware of all the routine happenings in the kindergarten. As she finishes her painting she knows exactly what to do. At the screen painting she hangs up her work, puts away her rubbish, and goes to wash her hands. She is quite particular about her clothing and if she accidentally wipes a bit of paint on herself she tries to wipe it off. When she goes to hang up a painting, she holds it as far away from herself as she can.

Observational Transcript Excerpts: Helen and the screen painting.

Helen is very interested in what is happening at the nearby table. L is working with the children on screen printing. It attracts a few parents. Helen watches fascinated. L glances up and notices that Helen has made an outline with red around her purple picture. "Oh an outline H", she says. "It looks like a map". Helen makes a big frame around the whole painting using red. She then chooses yellow and makes a couple of strokes, takes her painting down and holding it away from herself, hangs it up.

She bypasses the screen printing and goes to the collage and then into the toilet. L goes to check if she is OK and congratulates her for washing her hands. She stays in the bathroom for a while playing with the soap dispenser. Consequently she has washed her hands several times.

There is no one at the screen printing table and Helen stops to look. S comes up and crouches down beside her. She explains that she has to draw something and then cut it out at a nearby table, inviting her to do it. Helen quickly goes to the table and draws two circles. S comes up and offers to draw around H's hand. S tells her that when she has finished drawing she needs to cut it out. She asks Helen to choose a pair of scissors. "Not those ones they are a bit stiff". Helen sits quietly as S is interrupted by some children wanting her help too. "Cut it out for me" says one. "I can't cut it out but I can help you". "Helen can I help you get started with your cutting out?" Helen nods and cuts out a circle. She holds it up for S to see. "Well done Helen! Here let's start this one eh. Oh Helen, that's very good indeed. We'll put it in your pile here. Now you've got two and all you need to cut out is the hand". S shows her that folding the paper sometimes makes it easier to cut out tricky shapes. Helen works very hard at cutting out the hand. She holds the scissors awkwardly and finds the fingers hard to manage but it doesn't worry her particularly.

Helen goes to the table where the screens are set up. It's very crowded and she circles the table a couple of times waiting for a turn. There is a queue. S comes over and helps her find a space. She scoops the paint on to her screen and covers it completely. S asks her if she knows how to use the scraper? She nods. A girl comes up and asks her if she can go next. Helen nods and shows her her painty finger. She wipes it on her jersey. The girl points to a gap on Helen's screen. Helen has covered her screen about four times now. Two girls waiting are muttering "I wish Helen would hurry up. I hope there will be paint left over." Helen uses all the paint in the pot and then she competently begins the wiping process. "How are you going Helen?" asks S. "Oh Wow!" Helen reveals her print, picks it up, and then hangs it up. Then she runs into the bathroom to wash her hands—thoroughly.

These observations are the basis for the Learning Story.

Example

The teaching story which follows, shows teacher "S" working with children in the outdoor area of the kindergarten.

Adult "S's" "Challenge Course" Teaching Story

BELONGING	As S sets up outside, she continually invites the children around her to join in and help her take the equipment out of the shed. She leads by example and constantly chats to those children nearby about what she is thinking about. As children and parents come outside, although she doesn't stop what she is doing she discusses events, both personal to the parent and child as well as administrative matters.
WELLBEING	S is sensitive to the particular strengths and interests of individual children. This is evident in the way she asks for and invites help with carrying out the gear for the challenge course. She works in an unhurried way and spends time looking at what she and the children have made, using this as an opportunity to comment on each child's contribution to the challenge course. Special jokes with individual children support them to join in with the group task. S takes time to notice the children who have something to show her and to relate it to previous experiences. Both S and the children are equally involved in setting up the course—be it as commentators or actual builders.
EXPLORATION	The challenge course takes shape with joint attention to where it leads and the effect it may have on the other equipment around the place. As new structures are incorporated, S responds to children's questions and extends them by asking further open-ended questions. Many "dimensions" provide an exploration point and S capitalises on these. Size, weight, length, height, movement, and perspective are discussed as the children co-operate with S to build the course up. S always introduces the safety aspect for the children to be aware of. As the course is finished and the children test it out, S talks the walk—Up the plank, through the tunnel—is it dark?—as the children cross the course. She stands nearby to some and offers her hand to others. This "exploration" combines wellbeing and communication.
COMMUNICATION	S continually talks to the children in an unhurried and quiet way. She responds to questions and asks questions in return, looking to extend the dialogue with individual children and small groups. At the one point on the challenge course, the children are at her height and seem to enjoy the "equal" status that same height eye contact gives them. The conversations are varied, not just related to the challenges of the course. Children use the opportunity to share experiences from home. At times S chooses not to use language. For those children who do not seek conversation, S nods, smiles or offers a hand. She is constant in her praise of their efforts both in setting up the challenge course and in testing it out.
CONTRIBUTION	This is facilitated by S through her requests for help and her leading by example. She also rewards the contributions with praise, both verbal and non-verbal. Her acceptance of the children's ideas supports the ongoing involvement and shared responsibility for building up the obstacle course. Co-operation is needed for this. All types of help are valued, even the sideline comments.

Observational Transcript Excerpts: Teacher "S" and the challenge course.

S and L are outside setting up. S encourages the children to help her set up. They go into the shed and pull out the water trough which is full of toys. "Thank you children, that's great. Come on, can you help me with the sand pit?" She is referring to the cover. They all walk around unhooking the cover. "Thanks. Gosh, it's going to be hot today. It's actually going to be a nice day." L comes over to help her. Both S and L fold the cover back together. S continues to greet the children as they come outside. "Shall we go and get a trolley? Here, stand outside while I get them out of the shed." S and two children wheel the trolleys, full of toys to the sand pit. On her way back a boy throws a ball at her. "It's not your ball", he says. "It's not?" she replies. S and L continue to unpack the shed.

"B", asks S, "Was that your mum that brought you today?" "Yep". "Hey, that's nice". "Yep". "And who's going to pick you up?" My mum . . . and she's going to take me to McDonalds if I don't have any accidents. "Hmm", says S.

S continues to set up the outside gear—a seesaw, hangs up aprons. She and L chat about a child who was reluctant to stay . . . more ladders, a tunnel . . . are being placed around the outside. S goes over to the jungle area and collects up some tyres which she puts around the tunnel to hold it in place. It is the beginning of a challenge course. There are children on the swings and in the sand pit, at the water. S picks up a tyre full of water. "Ew yuk it's all over my shoe". The children nearby laugh. "Come on D, let's get more ladders". Two helpers now. "Oh, wow, thank you", she says. They all move over to the challenge course area. Just put them down here. "Thank you boys, you're really helpful". S sets up the planks and ladders. The children wait while she makes it safe. She continually greets the children as she works. Her pace is unhurried and the children are happy to wait. S is waylaid on her way to the shed. It is a mother who is also a committee member. S sorts out the payment for an upcoming event as she carries out the ladders and planks. The mother also wants to set up a visit with another child—S nods. She points out the child to the mother. Meanwhile a toddler has walked off with a pile of buckets.

S is now by the play houses. She moves them slightly and discusses with the children—which way shall I have them? She moves them OK? She checks it out with the children. OK? At that angle she realises that the slide will have to move too. The children test the ladders. "Not too tricky?" S asks. "It's quite tricky", she says. Now we need another reel. Now . . . morning N . . . S heads to the jungle area for a reel. A child calls to her on the way— "Look at my shoes" he says. "What sort are they?" asks S. A child notices some sticks rolling inside the reel. S stops the reel and they watch the sticks more closely as the reel moves. "We do need to move the slide. I'll just get another two planks." "I'll help" says Sh. "I can carry the small one." They head back to the shed.

As she walks past L, she and L discuss a child. L is filling the water trough. S returns to the challenge course with A for company. He tells her he's going shopping. Two boys demand S's attention as they kick a ball high into the air. "Wow!" she says, smiling.

S positions the reel and the ladders and then moves the slide. "I thought we'd make a little bridge to here. We probably need another ladder?" She brings another ladder from the shed. As she passes the water trough a ball lands in it. S and L and the children giggle. Finally the challenge course is all set up. "Start from the beginning and show me how it works?" she says. On her way back to the beginning of the course, she calls out to some boys to come round the front where we can see you.

"Now let's start at the beginning. Through the tunnel, up the ladder, on to the plank, across the plank, down the ladder, along the plank, up this ladder, on top of the boxes, down two ladders now—it's two ladders now. It's two ladders. Up and then down. Now it's up a plank, down the ladder, across the little bridge and up the ladder and then down the slide and that's the end. I'm going back to start again. Are you? Go back and start again." There are four children on the course. They repeat S's comments like up the ladder, and down the plank, across, through over up and across the box. "What is it again?" she asks M. "Across" says M. "Yes" says S. M up high on the boxes notices S's lipstick. "My mummy wears lips". "Does she?". "Yes, she wears lips." "Lipstick" says S. S follows them around the course. A newcomer passes her on his way up a ladder. "Hi teacher" he says. "Good morning, did you sleep in?" "Yeah!" "Me too". S continues to talk the children through the challenge course. This is the challenge course. "The what?" asks one. "It's a challenge course to see if you can climb". New children join the course, M on her third time comments to S that trains go through tunnels, and cars. "Brmmm", "Yes", nods S. "And it's dark in tunnels" says M. "Hmm", nods S again. One or two children begin balancing by using their arms. "That helps" agrees S. "That's a good idea."

These observations from the basis of "S's" Teaching Story.

Examples

These "centre teaching stories" for "Weka" Kindergarten were developed from the observations and the NUD*IST analyses:

**“Weka” Kindergarten
“Centre Teaching Stories”**

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story Through “responsive, reciprocal, respectful” adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
BELONGING	Knows and understands interests, needs, and strengths of children and the community The teachers understand the role the kindergarten has in the community as a long-established service. They are aware that they have been chosen by parents because they are a state kindergarten. Children and their parents are greeted by all teachers individually every session on arrival. Teachers listen carefully and include this “local” knowledge in the programme. Because all live locally their families are known to the kindergarten community and this contributes to a sense of stability as well as belonging.	Every child has a place to store his or her belongings. On display are works of art and photos of the children involved in the programme. Each child is allocated a “mat time” in a designated place and this is reinforced. The children can all find their names on a magnet board as they arrive. The environment is open and accessible for the children easily to help themselves to items. The routines for tidying up and regular events are inclusive of both adults and children with time allowed for individuals to decide where to join in if at all.	At arrival times, all teachers are readily available to talk to parents about their child and family with interest shown in wider connections to the community as it affects them all. Networks are fostered with families using the arrival and departure times to make social and sporting arrangements for their children and siblings. The teachers, who have older children at schools in the community, are part of these decisions. Knowledge about the families is used throughout the programme	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
WELLBEING	Offers consistent, stable care for individuals with consideration for all Teachers spend time with individual children to help them feel secure and safe and at the same time encourage them to look to their peers for support and encouragement as well. Teachers actively encourage children to assert themselves when appropriate by using words. Physical closeness is accepted as the norm. Routine health and safety procedures are reinforced with explanation and encouragement.	The environment has been set up to allow for easy access to all parts of the kindergarten, including free flow between outdoors and indoors, washing and toilet facilities. Morning tea is all together and social event for all present.	Long-term connections with the community enable the teachers to meet the needs of the families. What they know about the families' personal circumstances is acknowledged and accommodated to support them and their children. Tolerance of diversity is apparent as many different family types are present in this kindergarten.	
EXPLORATION	Extends children's curiosity by creating open-ended challenges Teachers spend time with children extending their questions into practice by encouraging them to test out their theories. Conversations are involved and include new ideas for children to make links to other contexts. Opportunities for quiet, individual exploration is managed by clever design of the environment and sensitive "non-intervention".	The environment is changed each term, and every day the special interest table offers children the opportunity to explore some new aspect of the curriculum. A variety of equipment is offered to the children and they are encouraged to explore new ways of using existing resources in conjunction with special "extras". Outdoors is set up by both the children and the teachers as a joint collaborative venture. All equipment is brought out or made available in the outdoors, either under the verandah or in the open depending on the weather.	Teachers share verbal observations and written observations about children's endeavours, interests, and skills with families. Photos and displays of how exploration is encouraged and supported are regular and change as required.	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
COMMUNICATION	Encourages all children to communicate in their own way The teachers enable the children to feel as though they are really listened to. The notion of belonging—that everyone has a place and a right to be heard is evident as the teachers always get down to the child's level to listen and talk.	Books are attractively displayed and easily accessed by the children. There is a wide range of topics covered in the library. The story area is attractive and welcoming with cushions and thick carpet. A regular story time is well attended and stories are also read throughout the sessions and at mat times. Music is also a well-loved regular happening. A variety of cultures are represented in literature and music.	All teachers communicate with parents on arrival. At departure time one teacher circulates among the parents while mat times are in progress, making sure that she is available to everyone. Diversity is recognised and reflected in the communication with parents which is undertaken in a professional manner.	
CONTRIBUTION	Respects children's diverse contributions to the sessions The regular routines and happenings in this kindergarten establish the sense of openness which invites contribution by the children. They determine the content of the programme by contributing their ideas. A sense of fairness pervades as the teachers encourage the children to consider the rights of the whole groups when making decisions.			

The "Teaching Story in Action" for "Weka" Kindergarten was constructed with reference to observations of a musical "happening".

"Weka" Kindergarten
A Centre Teaching Story in Action
"A Concert at Weka Kindergarten"

BELONGING Knows and understands interests, needs, and strengths of children and the community	Teacher capitalised on previous (and current) interest in concerts and latest music—Riverdance and Spice Girls—to include in a music session. (NB: the music was available on tape.)
WELLBEING Offers consistent, stable care for individuals with consideration for all	Each child is able to join in with special attention to performers and to audience roles. For the "shy", a knee and cuddle provide the support to join in.
EXPLORATION Extends children's curiosity by creating open-ended challenges	The extensive "planning" that goes into the concert is supported by all staff—"tickets" are found, sold, change given, seats arranged, and performers' items chosen. The children and teacher thoroughly "explore" the idea of a concert from several aspects.
COMMUNICATION Encourages all children to communicate in their own way	The "technical" language associated with the concerts is used. This concert involved all types of communication verbal, non-verbal, creative movement, and singing of traditional rhymes.
CONTRIBUTION Respects children's diverse contributions to the sessions	Each child's item is valued and given time to begin, run, and end. The audience are encouraged to be a "receptive" player in the process. The attention given to the individual and the group is balanced in the interests of all.

Concert at "Weka" Kindergarten

L (the teacher) and some children have been discussing what to do at music this morning. It is decided to have a concert. We need some tickets. L finds a roll of tickets and hands out these to the children telling them to go and sell them. A concert is set up. Two children give out the tickets and there is a basket set up for the tickets to go into. "Go and see M", L tells a child, "M has the tickets." "I want one", "Me too." "I've got one." There is lots of conversation and discussion about tickets.

"Now", says L, "What is going to go in this concert?" "The clown song." "OK. Who is going to be a clown? Off you go get dressed up." There are three clowns. While this is happening, L invites the children to sing a song. H volunteers to sing, one for everyone. He comes up next to L and sings Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. "Anyone else? Shh B, are you at the concert?" "No."

"Then you be very quiet." He nods. "I want to be a clown" says J. "Maybe next time." S joins them at the mat. She gathers up some of the bits and pieces and quietly starts to tidy up in the background. The clowns begin to dance to the tape of Tricky the Clown. There is a round of applause.

J has offered to do a dance. "What sort of music do you want?" "Rock 'n' roll". A girl jumps up to join him. J and F dance a mixture of Elvis and Riverdance for the children. Again there is an enthusiastic round of applause.

"Who's next?" "Me!" "What do you want?" "The Macarena". "Do you want any help?" "OK". Two girls get up to dance. They are very familiar with the actions and the hip roll is wonderful. Clapping. B and H now want to do Riverdance. "But the music is at home", says B. "Oh", says L, "What about Kindy Music?" "Yep", says B. "Fast or slow?" asks L. "Umm, fast. It'll have to be Rock 'n' Roll". The dancers jog and jump moving their feet. "Boy those feet dance fast. Look at those feet," comments L.

Excerpts of observations of a concert: The basis of a Teaching Story in Action

"I've got that music. L!, L! I want to be last!" "OK. What music do you want? Spice Girls. Hmm. OK." She already has the tape and it's ready to play. "Are you ready for the Spice Girls?" There are two. "Yeah." One of the girls jumps in with an amazing cartwheel and then does the splits! She star jumps and stands on her hands several times. She lies on the ground and then lunges to the side. In an enthusiastic jumps she falls and cries. L comforts her and she jumps up again to finish the "routine". Final applause. "Hey great concert! Thank you children. Great idea." L comments to me. "It was totally started by them today I had a completely different idea for music today". "Who would like some pois? Shall we have poi now? Yeah Yay." **The children go to fetch a poi. L finds the tape and offers some gentle reminders about space and how to use the poi. You might have to move into a different space if you get mixed up. L repeats the instructions from the waiata tape. The children try to do what she says. It is a very calm session. Two poi get tangled. "Be careful", calls out L, "they might break."** "OK", says L, "put them back if you like", and she holds out the kete. "Is it tidy-up time?" "Not quite", says L "you have got time to do one other thing for a minute." Some of the children decide to stay with the poi and the tape stays on for them.

It is tidy-up time. I notice a smiley face hanging by the door to the outside and ask about it. S begins to explain that it's their way of telling the children when it's OK to go outside. B comes up to me and tells me that when it's green you can go outside but if it's red you can't. L picks up from there—we had trouble getting the morning children to stay inside to help tidy up so we use the face as a message that you have to stay inside until you have done two tidy-up jobs plus to let the children know if there is a teacher outside.

Excerpts of observations of a concert: The basis of a Teaching Story in Action.

Example

Centre 7

"BIG TREE"

Description of "Big Tree" Childcare Centre

"Big Tree" is an all-day childcare centre, situated in a converted house. The house includes small rooms and corridors, but also a large covered veranda on the sheltered side. The childcare centre is work-based, serves a middle-class socioeconomic group, and is ethnically mixed with Pakeha, Māori, Pacific Islands, and other ethnic groups involved. "Big Tree" childcare centre is managed as a parent/staff co-operative.

There are 33 children on the roll, 22 are over 2 years of age, and 11 are under 2 years. The ratios of staff to children are one to four for the under-2s, and one to eight for the over-2s. The centre is an all-day childcare centre which takes children full time or part time, but not on a casual basis.

Learning and Teaching Stories

The Learning Story "I'm awake now" involves "Santosh", an Indian girl aged 11 months. The teaching story involves "J" with a group of children in the garden. An overall Centre Teaching Story in action focuses on the context of story reading.

This is "Santosh's" Learning Story:

Santosh's "I'm Awake Now"

Learning Story

BELONGING	Santosh helps herself to the games, books and toys on the low shelves in the babies room. She shows an interest in the instruments and new things from the cupboard. Although S, her primary caregiver, isn't there, she has attached herself to M and refers back to her often. When S returns to the rooms, Santosh is clearly delighted and crawls over to her quickly for a cuddle.
WELLBEING	Santosh has not been so well and needed a good sleep. She woke up after an exceptionally long sleep for her and was in a very good mood. All the staff commented to her what a good sleep. She beams at them. She is familiar with the routines and crawls into her secondary caregiver's arms for a bottle and a cuddle. She enjoys playing a stand up fall down game in M's lap. All staff share information about Santosh's health, her sleep pattern and appetite. They also talk about her latest achievement—two steps unaided the day before.
EXPLORATION	Santosh explores the environment actively. She uses M as a reference point and crawls then pulls herself up in various parts of the room. M plays peep po with her and she joins in the game by hiding in the cupboard. She experiments with the toys and M encourages her with smiles and cuddles and by talking to her about what she is doing. Anything and everything is open for investigation. She tries to pull the cord of the laptop and is told "no" in Māori and English as well as being distracted. She watches new events and happenings with interest and is encouraged to persist with them by staff singing to her as well as joining in with her games.
COMMUNICATION	Santosh babbles and is very vocal at times. She shows clearly when she is pleased, sad, happily engaged, as well as angry. She expresses her point of view with both sounds and movement, waving her arms about when she was told not to touch an electric cord behind a cupboard. She also makes her wants and needs understood by seeking physical contact. Both M and S explain to her what is happening and when and why. Santosh interacts with other babies, playing with the same types of toys or games. The staff either cuddle or are on the ground with the babies all the time. They sing and talk to the babies in both Māori and English. Santosh loves the music and bangs on drums or tambourines as she joins in with songs. Da da da. She sings independently too.
CONTRIBUTION	Santosh will initiate games as well as join in with others' games. There are no surprises about the routine comings and goings. Staff ensure that communication between home and centre is ongoing on a daily basis.

Observational Transcript Excerpts: Santosh, aged 11 months, is awake.

Santosh is awake and outside on the deck. M is saying "It was a long sleep for you Santosh. That was a good sleep." Santosh is standing and balancing on E's pram. She walks her way around the pram and smiles at M and then walks her way back. She uses the pram as a prop. S comes past and she and M talk about lunch and who will do what with whom. M explains that Santosh hasn't had her bottle yet.

"We have to go in now," M tells E and Santosh, "even though it's so nice, we have to go in." Santosh gets down and crawls off to the water play. M bends down and picks her up. She wheels E inside with Santosh on her hip.

Back inside, E and Santosh are the only babies in the under-2 area. Santosh watches and calls out to E as he lies on the ground. "Eaa, Eaa" it sounds like. "I'll just put E in his swing and then I'll give you your bottle. Good waiting Santosh really good waiting." Santosh is sitting quietly holding her feeder against her face and sucking her thumb. She crawls over to M who takes her in her lap and begins to feed her her bottle. She sings quietly to her as she does this.

These are the observations from which the Learning Story was developed.

M makes eye contact with both Santosh on her lap and E in his swing. E starts to cry. "E" she calls, "E, are you hungry?" She wriggles over to him and pushes him gently. She hands him a toy which he mouths. Santosh has almost finished her bottle and she looks relaxed as she lies in M's lap. Once she has finished M sits her up and takes off her feeder. Santosh hold out her hands for her bottle. She turns it around and puts it upside down in her mouth. She shakes it and waves it about. "Gaaa wayha", she calls. She start to bang her bottle on the ground and then holds it in the air.

M takes it from her as she crawls to the low shelves. "I'll just put it up here, OK?" Santosh pulls herself up to standing and takes hold of two shakers. She loses her balance and M catches her. "You OK? Here play with the shakers on the ground." Santosh though has found the telephone. She picks up the receiver and holds it to her ear. "Da Ha" she goes and hands it to M. M takes it and has a pretend conversation with Santosh's mum. Then she hands it back to Santosh, who talks into it again. Santosh has found the buttons on the phone and she tries to push them. Then she picks up the phone and puts it in her mouth.

Santosh moves along the shelf to the tambourines. "It's a tambourine", says M and begins to sing a song about Santosh playing the tambourine. Santosh is very interested and bangs and shakes the tambourine gently. When M stops, Santosh starts again. She shakes the tambourine and when she bangs it M helps her to shake it in the air.

Santosh walks along to the mirror using the shelf for support. She looks into the mirror and talks to herself before going back to the tambourine. M talks about shaking the tambourine and Santosh picks it up again for a second before crawling quickly back to the mirror.

In comes A with H. "Hi Santosh", calls H. Santosh turns around and smiles at her. Then she crawls over to the drum and bangs it. "DA da da da" she sings as she bang. it. Two more children come into the room. They knock loudly at the door. M sings to them. Mi comes in and turns around and around. M sings to them a waiata about moving and turning and stamping. Santosh crawls over to an empty cupboard. She crawls inside and watches the boys dancing. Santosh crawls over to M and climbs to stand. Using M as a prop she walks around her. M leaves the room to fetch E's bottle. Santosh watches her go. She picks up a puzzle and fiddles with it. Then she crawls about pushing a little car. She pushes it over to the drum and has a go on that again. Then she quickly turns and crawls to the cupboard. "Are you hiding? Peep po." Santosh is delighted by this game.

She notices the cord to the intercom hanging down and goes to grab hold of it to pull herself up. "Kaore Santosh. It might hurt you". Santosh listens and moves away to where there is a plug. "Kaore Santosh. Here, play with the ball." M tries to distract her away. M moves over to Santosh to move her away and Santosh yells at her and waves her arms about angrily.

Mi takes the ball. He gives it to Santosh who smiles and rocks back and forth with the ball going "da ga aa ha". She notices the plug again. And as she goes to touch it she looks at M. S returns to the room and M talks to her about the plug. Yes she likes it. Just move the cupboard. M has been feeding E and Santosh goes over to her whenever she starts out. M has become a reference point.

The Teaching Story involves adult "J", interacting with children in the garden:

Adult "J's" "Fungi in the Garden" Teaching Story

BELONGING	A stand of mushrooms has been discovered in the garden. The children are interested what sort of fungi they are. J listens attentively to each child's theories about the fungi and responds to the wide variety of questions individually and in ways appropriate to the child concerned. She makes time to notice each child and to ensure that each child has had a look if they want to.
WELLBEING	J carefully and slowly explains about the fungi and that some maybe poisonous. She tells the children that they need to pick them because the babies might eat them by mistake. She also emphasises how important it is to wash hands if you have touched them. She again encourages and responds to the questions the children ask. She facilitates the learning by allowing the children to take some initiatives and roll back the river stones surrounding the garden. Each child seems to have a different question about a different thing they can see. J endeavours to listen to all the children and assures them that they will all get a turn to ask or tell.
EXPLORATION	To extend the discovery of fungi in the garden, J uses a reference book from inside. It is familiar to the children and they then go on to "discover" other creatures. J is involved in explaining and describing habitat and environment. She reminds the children to be careful not to hurt the insects and encourages them to think about why, for example, snails have shells. By using their knowledge as a starting place, J introduces new ideas. She follows the children's interests and even though the topics change very fast, she manages to maintain and sustain interest. J refers to the whole centre environment and makes connections with the wider world. At one point she calls on the children to remember when they used to play under the sycamore tree in the garden next door.
COMMUNICATION	J's constant encouragement of the children's interest is rewarded by floods of questions. She makes sure that she responds to each child in an appropriate way and encourages the less fluent or shy children to share their ideas in non-verbal ways—with a smile or a cuddle. When she is not sure she refers to a book she has brought from outside. The older children in particular refer to it often. She demonstrates how it can be used and shows the children the diagrams. They match their fungi with the picture and move on to other diagrams. She informs the children by using the correct botanical terms and introduces the odd Māori word. In response to overeager seed gathering she quietly explains how to gather the seeds carefully so that they won't be damaged. Her tone reflects the children's wonder and at the same time extends their interest with new words. The children's stories are enjoyed and extended on. They relate to previous experiences in other contexts, both at home and in the centre.
CONTRIBUTION	J makes the children aware of their place in looking after the environment so that it is a safe place for them all to play. She tries to ensure that the conversations are inclusive of all the children around her—from the just talking to the highly articulate. Each child's contribution—be it theory or question is valued. J is aware of the impact certain children have on others and adjusts her strategies accordingly. She reminds the children of experiences beyond those happening in the centre, making links between home and the wider world.

Observational Transcript Excerpts: J's "Fungi in the Garden" teaching story.

J comes rushing into the lounge and searches for a book. "Fungi", she says, "in the garden". Outside crouched down around a small garden plot surrounded by river stones there is a stand of mushrooms. J has the book open—it is a big book—and she is encouraging the children to find a picture that looks like the mushrooms they have discovered. They are looking through the book to see if they are plants or fungi. The children have rolled back all the stones surrounding the garden looking for more fungi. "Hey!" calls out one, "a leech". "It's a worm", calls out another, "it sucks blood". At story time earlier J had been reading a book about insects and there was a section in it about leeches and how they sucked blood. "I don't think we have leeches in NZ. Come and check in the book. What could it be? Hey, look over here" calls J. "Can you see a silvery track? It's shiny. Can you see it. Do you know what made that? . . . It's got a hard shell . . .," gives them a clue. "It's a snail," guess some of the children. "Yes that's it", says J. "Sometimes spiders have hard shells", says N.

The children start to pick the mushrooms, they pick them all. Hand them to me calls out J and then go and wash your hands because they might be poisonous. We need to pick them all because the babies might eat them.

P is telling Jo a story about his Dad and when he was a little baby. "Yes he moved the rocks in the garden and he ate the mushrooms and he died and then he went to the doctor and he was a man". "Did he go to heaven?" asked R.

Some of the children are pulling the petals off the marigolds and breaking the seed pods. J explains that the middle part makes the seeds. "Leave the flowers now and don't pick them any more because they have seeds. Wait a minute and I'll take the mushrooms inside and wash my hands. I wouldn't want the babies to eat them and if you have touched the mushrooms you need to wash your hands too. Then I'll be back OK? Good."

Back outside J calls to the children, particularly Jo. "Come on, come with me," and she takes them out of the gate to show them a pot full of flowering marigolds. She points out the seed and then asks Jo to help her gather some of the seeds. At the same time she explains that if you pick the petals, then the flower can't grow to make the seeds. The other children with her all gather seed and bring them back into the centre grounds.

"We found some seeds", they call to B. "What are you going to do with them?" "We're going to plant them." "Do you remember how?" asks J. "Yep". They pull the flowers gently apart to reveal the seeds. "Can I have one" asks N, "a little one from inside?" J is now at the garden next to the centre path. The children quickly plant their seeds. "Do you recognise these leaves? They're helicopter leaves. They seem to be like the rotary blades of a helicopter. It's from a sycamore tree." "What's a sycamore tree?" they ask. J takes them to the gate to show them the sycamore tree in the garden next door.

These are some of the observations from which the Teaching Story was constructed.

Example

The Centre Teaching Story for "Big Tree" Childcare Centre follows in tabulated form:

**"Big Tree" Childcare Centre
Centre Teaching Stories**

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
BELONGING	Appreciates and supports children's differences and needs Teachers hold a shared philosophy based on welcoming all families with an expectation that what they need for their children to belong will happen as far as possible. This philosophy is modelled by the supervisor who, as a good leader, supports quality practice in her staff.	Attention is given to creating an environment that is respectful of individuals. Each child has a special locker, and special lunch box place. Under-2s have ready access to appropriate equipment as do over-2s. Value is placed on individual belongings.	Teachers constantly communicate individual anecdotes they observe. Efforts are made to maintain continuity between the night before and the next morning. Time is spent all together in the early morning and this contributes to a sense of belonging.	
WELLBEING	Children are valued as individuals and as part of the whole This centre has a programme planning system based on primary caregivers' observations and discussions of individual children's needs, interests, and strengths. These are used together with theory to inform their practice.	Time is spent with each child attending to special needs. Routine events such as meals and sleeps are characterised by caring attention to individual routines and nurturing desires. Cuddles are frequent and welcomed by both children and adults.	Continuity between home and centre is enhanced by clear, open communication. Primary caregivers ensure that transition times are relaxed and easy. Individual needs of families are acknowledged and supported.	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<i>Centre Teaching Story</i> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
EXPLORATION	Explores ideas through language, relationships, and physical world Teachers emphasise connections with ideas that children have. Working theories generated by the children are a basis for exploration of relationships and the environment.	Teachers use the natural environment plus the advantages of the building to full effect. A wide range of resources are available and utilised to enhance exploration intellectually, socially, and physically. Concepts of spirituality are explored as they arise from children's contexts.	Family interests and strengths are incorporated where possible into this busy childcare centre. Ideas, conversations, "creations" are documented and shared with parents both daily and through profiles of individual children. Te Whāriki forms the framework for this "reporting back".	
COMMUNICATION	Extends conversations based on anticipated interest and enjoyment Close attention to individuals combined with observation of interests enable the staff to extend and enjoy conversations with children. This encourages conversations between peers. Both English and Māori are used. Teachers use Māori to a level personal to them. Songs from various cultural contexts are sung throughout the day as appropriate. Children's "jokes" and "stories" are listened to and enjoyed.	The individual lockers and personal profiles "communicate" to parents. A wide selection of books, fiction and non-fiction, are referred to during the day. The "concept" of print is supported.	Conversations with family members are personalised and seem to continue where they left off. Arrivals and departures are key communication times used by both partners—the teachers and parents/caregivers to discuss the day (or night).	

<i>Te Whāriki Strands</i>	<u><i>Centre Teaching Story</i></u> <i>Through "responsive, reciprocal, respectful" adult relationships</i>	<i>Through providing a learning environment</i>	<i>Through connections with family and community</i>	<i>Through the support of management policies and processes</i>
CONTRIBUTION	Appropriate balance between adults' help and children's contribution Routines in particular encourage the children to contribute, as appropriate, to the running of the centre. Time and effort are spent encouraging independence with an "imparting" effect that enhances self-esteem and is rewarding to teachers.	The centre is in a reconverted house and the various rooms have separate functions. They are called "lounge", kitchen etc which contributes to a homely feel. The flow of the day determines what is available for the very young infants/toddlers and the older children. There is ready access to equipment. Self-management particularly with clothing is encouraged.	As a childcare centre, the needs of families are paramount. Consistency and continuity are characteristics of the value placed on family contribution which "affirms" links between home and centre.	

Finally, "Big Tree" Childcare Centre's Teaching Story in Action is based on observations in the context of story reading.

**"Big Tree" Childcare Centre
Centre Teaching Story in Action
"Stories and Sun Screen at Big Tree"**

BELONGING Appreciates and supports children's differences and needs	J uses children's different interests as a discussion point to link to the story.
WELLBEING Children are valued as individuals and a part of the whole	Individual children's questions and comments were listened to and incorporated. The individual differences of children are catered for when applying sun screen.
EXPLORATION Explored ideas through language, relationships, and the physical world	J constantly extends on children's questions and enhances understanding by using the stories and her own knowledge. Options for considering new ideas are offered to the children. Their ideas are taken seriously.
COMMUNICATION Extends conversations based on anticipated interest and enjoyment	Conversation relating to the stories and links the stories throw up to the wider world provide a rich "communication" environment. J and B both encourage children to participate and ensure that all feel "heard".
CONTRIBUTION Appropriate balance between adults' help and child's contribution	Children direct adults when it comes to applying sun screen. Children and adults take responsibility for hats.

Observational Transcript Excerpts: Stories and sun screen at "Big Tree".

It's after lunch and J is reading to the children who aren't resting. A is sitting quietly listening. She is very alert and responsive to the big book of nonsense rhymes. She has a balloon. She asks about a word—fuzz. "What is fuzz?" she asks J, who explains and starts to talk about the different kinds of hair in the pictures. She begins a new rhyme. "Hey", calls out A, "that one has got spiky hair". "This time it's a witch poem. What do witches have for lunch?" asks J. "Bugs", calls out a child, "they eat nasty things. They eat slugs and snails", whispers A. "Do they eat them cooked?" She shakes her head. "You know at the new New World they have . . . oh I've forgotten." "Oh yeah at the new new store they have crabs." "Are they alive?" asks J. "Yep". "Do you eat them alive?" "Yep", answers A. "I've got bubble gum from the new new store" says J (a child). The conversation goes around a bit. A talks about her having heaps of bubble gum at home.

"Let's choose this book", says J. "Can we have another book after this one?" "Yes, it's a book about the life cycle of a chicken". A calls out to J, "I've got an egg. I laid it in the bath". J laughs. "Did you and did it hatch?" "NO!" answers A. "Was it a real egg?" D is silent. J begins to read the story. "Actually it was a real egg", says A. J begins to read the book and stops to explain about the white and the yolk. There is a picture of the blood vessels. "Do you have blood vessels?" J asks the group. "No", replies A. "Do you have blood vessels N?" asks J. "Yep". "Next there is a picture of a black dot. This is a picture of the chick in the egg. It looks like a little black dot." This begins an exchange about photos of babies inside their mother's womb. A is very excited.

These observations were used to construct the "Big Tree" Centre Teaching Story in Action.

"My mum has got a photo of me like that." "So you have", says J. "I remember that photo, that is called a scan". "What's that". J explains that it is like an X-ray of the baby moving inside the womb. A and the others look at one another. The story continues . . . "there is a photo of the chick in the egg." "There's its mouth", says A, "and there's its nose? Is that the right word?" asks J "Yep", says A. "Nope", she says next. "Let's read on", says J. She constantly extends the conversation. "The chick has an egg tooth". "What's that for?" asks A. "Let's read on and find out". "I've got a book that hatches eggs at home, J", A tells her. "I'll bring it for you tomorrow". J introduced the question— "What else lays eggs?" The children respond with penguins, lizards. "Do sharks?" asks A. "No not sharks". "Well frogs do". "Yes and what happens to them?" asks J. A suddenly has a tummy ache. She crawls on to J's knee and J tries to find out where the pain is. "Do you need the wharepaku?" "No". The next story starts. It is about animals that lay eggs. Several of the children clamour as the creatures they said laid eggs are mentioned. A is still snuggled up to J. She has recovered from her stomach ache. "Why do you have just a bite or two", she asks J in response to a phrase in the story. J describes the situation of being full of food but then seeing something delicious and then wanting to taste something new. "Why is the monster doing this?" asks A. "You'll see". A little further on in the story. "Why did the monster look like that?" Before J has a chance to answer, A has leapt up to choose another book. "This one now", she calls. "Do you want an answer to your question?" smiles J. "Yes". A says and nods her head vigorously. The next story begins. A is quiet and watches intently. It finishes and up jumps A again to choose another book. She chooses one that they read 5 minutes before. "We've had that one" says J. "Noooo" sings A. "Yeees" sings back J. J stands up to stretch. She begins a conversation with N about his holiday. What follows is a long conversation about dinosaurs and mud pools. A is very interested. J wants his drink, J gets up to get it for him. "Can we have another story?" asks A. "We've got the Itchy Witch," calls out A and she brushes the crumbs off herself. She confides in N. She skips around Itchy Witch. B comes in as it is a shift change. J explains that it is Itchy Witch. "OK" say B, and J is going to sit down to drink. "OK" says B with a wink. "Itchy Witch, Itchy Witch" chants B. But says B "What did I buy at lunch time?" She has new blue sun hat. They comment on this and the need for them in the sun. Some of the children are more restless now. The balloons are bonking children. Whakarongo, Titiro. She starts to include the children in the last phrase. When she finished the story, A immediately asks for another one. B starts to play a hands-on game. "Why are we doing that?" asks N. B smiles. B reads a poem. She talks with the children about the words and the pictures. It's James K Baxter's poem called "Stormy Weather". Gales and storms and fishing provide the topics for the conversation. The weather improves in the story. "Hey J did that", calls out A. "What's that?" says B, who has inadvertently turned over two pages. "Oh" comments B. They finish the story and it's tidy up time before going outside again. Links are made between today's weather and the weather in the book.

"Hey A can you stack those blocks out of the way please, because the babies might be coming in here for a while." A is concentrating on finishing the puzzles. Those children that are ready to go are asked to get their hats and sandals. B comments all the time on how well they are doing. "Great work A. That's good listening, well done." A gets a bit stuck with a puzzle. A asks N to help her. He turns to do it just as B asks him to get his hat and sandals. A isn't offended and continues to complete the puzzle. "We've lost the whale?" she calls out A. One or two children rush over to see. "Here it is". B is busy putting sun screen on children who need help and encourages the children who can manage independently with supportive language. A says she is still finishing her puzzle. "I just need to go toilet", she yells and rushes out. "A close the door please—too late", comments B. "Why?" asks N. Some babies are still asleep. B starts to sing with the children. S comes in and sits by A. "Hey A has nearly finished this puzzle—it must be our hardest puzzle" she says. "Yes", comments B. "I know. She's been really good. Put it away now". A goes over to B and stands there waiting for her to put on the sun screen. "On my neck please and on my face, you forgot my face," she tells B. "No I didn't, I just wasn't up to it. Now off you go to get something for your head and your feet." A disappears into the locker room. We hear a lot of chatting. "Are your hands working as fast as your tongue?" "Yes" calls out A. A minute later A appears at the door. "DaDaa!" she sings and jumps into the room with a dramatic stand. "Oh well done, excellent", rewards B. "Now we're all ready to go outside except one person hasn't got a hat." The children look a bit perplexed. "Yep", says B, "there is one person without a hat. It's you", they all laugh. "You need your hat". "Thank you", says B, "will you get it for me P". A leaps up. "Not you A, I asked P". "Oh". "Then we can go outside", says B.

Example

Discussion

The process of observation and analysis outlined in the above case studies had two purposes. Firstly, to collect observation data in "effective practice" centres that would give clues towards some essential elements of quality of the Te Whāriki strands in action, and secondly to trial some possible approaches to self-evaluation. For each case study this dual process worked well. The process towards the construction of the overall teaching story was a useful tool in articulating the key elements of a centre's philosophy and the expression of this in practice. Te Whāriki was designed to allow for each centre to construct its own programme for implementing the given Principles, Strands, and Goals, and the Centre Teaching Story is, in effect, a summary of each centre's approach towards delivering Te Whāriki as a curriculum for children. The progression of steps leading to the Centre Teaching Story could therefore be an integral part of any process of self-evaluation. Across all of the seven centres there was a favourable response to the reflective process that the construction of the Centre Teaching Story involved; in particular, centres liked its origins in the Learning Stories for individual children. Teachers themselves, however, are more orientated towards the learning of children rather than appraising their own teaching style and practice. The development of the Teaching Story broadens the focus of reflection, and is an important part of the evaluation process.

For the researchers the Teaching Story in Action that used the summary Centre Teaching Story as a focus for observing a specific learning/teaching context seemed a useful approach to develop further in any evaluation framework.

The aspect that was less clearly evident, and will need further consideration in any proposed evaluation framework, is the category in the Centre Teaching Story—*Through the support of management policies and processes*. This category was not something where the "days in the life of the centre" kind of observation—the ethnographic data collected—was so useful, whereas all the other categories of the Centre Teaching Story could be collected through direct observation. It will be noted that the category of "management" had already caused some discussion in the development of the models. It had been shifted outside the immediate evaluation cycle to a separate place (see model 1(c)). It was envisaged that discussion by staff on the evaluation observations would stimulate reflection on implications for management in any proposed actions for change in the centre programme. The researchers had hoped that the management column of the Centre Teaching Story would be constructed through follow-up discussions with the staff. A lack of time was possibly part of the explanation why fewer connections were made here. While some centres did make clear connections, others saw the management role as more remote. There are many styles of centre management in early childhood and this aspect needs to be addressed further, but we remain convinced that this role needs to have a place in any evaluation framework. In the proposed action research phase of this project more time will be allowed in the trials for reflection and action in relation to management.

A Summary of "Centre Teaching Stories"

In addition to constructing case studies of the seven "effective practice" centres, the researchers developed a summary of the Teaching Stories across the centres. This provides summary examples of how different centres demonstrated their priorities and philosophies with regard to the five Strands of Te Whāriki. It is not constructed for any comparative evaluation purposes. Over all, however, there was clearly evidence of implementation of the five Strands of Te Whāriki in the detailed observations analysed for each of the seven centres. This of course could be a major difference between the research process in these particular centres and any future evaluation framework which must be able to operate in less effective centres as well.

Summary of "Centre Teaching Stories"

	1 "Selwyn" Kindergarten	2 "Te Moana" Playcentre	3 "Taniwha" Playcentre	4 "Events" Community Creche	5 "Croissant" Workplace Childcare	6 "Weka" Kindergarten	7 "Big Tree" All-day Childcare
BELONGING	Knowing and understanding children's interests, needs, and strengths.	Knowing and understanding children's and adults' interests and background.	Affirming the value of children and parents working together.	Helping children and their parents towards a strong sense of belonging to the creche community.	Sharing a philosophy of teaching with good leadership which provides a sense of belonging for all.	Knowing and understanding interests and needs of children and the community.	Appreciating and supporting children's differences and needs.
WELLBEING	Addressing children's needs with caring concern.	Meeting infants' and children's needs immediately.	Enhancing children's feelings of personal worth, confidence, and self-respect.	Addressing children's needs with caring concern.	Calm and caring processes ensuring children are secure and healthy.	Offering consistent, stable care for individuals with consideration for all.	Valuing children as individuals and as part of the whole.
EXPLORATION	Expanding children's horizons by creating challenges and encouraging creativity.	Offering spontaneous choice of contexts, encouraging children who show an interest to persist.	Inviting children to explore ideas about personal relationships as well as discovering the natural and physical world.	Encouraging children to engage with challenge and make their own discoveries.	Providing a well-resourced environment for a diverse range of exploratory activities.	Extending children's curiosity by creating open-ended challenges.	Exploring ideas through language, relationships, and the physical world.
COMMUNICATION	Inviting communication and expression of children's feelings.	Facilitating reciprocal conversations in English. Introducing Maori words.	Encouraging children's expression of their feelings and ideas.	Supporting children in expressing their feelings, needs, and relationships.	Encouraging children to communicate with each other in positive ways through adult modelling.	Encouraging all children to communicate in their own way.	Extending conversations based on anticipated interest and enjoyment.
CONTRIBUTION	Supporting children's self-help and co-operative skills.	Encouraging children to take responsibility for their own actions as they affect others.	Expanding children's understanding of the rights of themselves and others.	Affirming children as individuals while encouraging them to learn to play together.	Children contributing to all activities including help with younger children.	Respecting children's diverse contributions to the sessions.	Providing an appropriate balance between adults' help and children's contribution.

NOTE 1: Each centre's teaching story has been constructed through NUD*IST analysis and approved by the centre.

7. A LEARNING AND TEACHING STORY APPROACH TO EVALUATION

The intention of the first two phases of this research was to suggest an approach to evaluation which early childhood centres participating in an action research phase could use for self-evaluation. This end product is a preliminary framework which, in the next phase of research (currently under funding consideration), would be developed for trialling in a range of centres as part of an action research process.

The consultations and ethnographic observations from phases one and two confirm the importance of linking evaluation and assessment together, as recommended in the literature review (Cubey & Dalli, 1996). This has led to the development of a proposal for an assessment and evaluation framework that combines the approach of Learning Stories (Carr) and Teaching Stories (Podmore & May). With the conclusion of Margaret Carr's *Project for Assessing Children's Experiences*, it is timely that the next phase connect and trial both processes. The flyer included as appendix F summarises firstly, the combined processes of "Learning Stories that empower learners" and "Teaching Stories that create responsive, reciprocal, and respectful relationships with people, places, and things". The connections of this Learning and Teaching Story framework to the Principles of Te Whāriki should be noted. Secondly, the flyer highlights the crucial facilitating role of adults as teachers who:

- observe and listen to children
- provide a learning environment
- make connections with family and community
- are supported by management policies and processes.

A framework for the Learning Story has already been developed and successfully trialled by Margaret Carr. Our project trialled this framework in a range of "effective practice" centres. The next task of our project was to develop an interleaved framework for the Teaching Story that could be useful as a tool for trialling self-evaluation across a wider range of centres, particularly in relation to quality.

The researchers have sought to ensure that the philosophy of Te Whāriki, which allows (and indeed requires) each centre to develop or "weave" their own programme around the Principles, Strands, and Goals, be reflected in any framework for evaluation. At the same time we were mindful of concerns that Te Whāriki allows for wide possibilities of interpretation because it is not particularly prescriptive (Cullen, 1996). The proposed framework uses the concept of Learning and Teaching Stories which are constructed or "woven" by each centre in the spirit of Te Whāriki. The Learning and Teaching Stories encourage centres to reflect upon their programme in relation to such things as:

- the learning experiences of individual children;
- adults' relationships with children and the ways in which adults support and enhance childrens' learning and development;
- the construction of the learning environment;
- relationships and connections with families;
- the expression and implementation of their particular philosophies and priorities; and,
- the support of management policies and processes. See model 1(c).

It was easy to observe Te Whāriki successfully in action in the "effective" practice centres, but the proposed framework still provides an effective step-wise pathway towards the development of a Centre Teaching Story, which then becomes an instrument of self-evaluation. The researchers are convinced that this self-reflective/weaving process is necessary to enhance the quality and effectiveness of early childhood teaching. This view is supported by research trials and ongoing professional development work on the implementation of Te Whāriki (Dunedin College of Education, 1994; Foote, Irvine, & Turnbull, 1996; Haggerty 1996, 1998; Haggerty & Hubbard, 1994; Jordan, 1996). The findings to date provide a preliminary framework to guide management and staff in action research trials towards an appropriate evaluation processes.

Developing a Framework for the Teaching Story

The concept of the Teaching Story is operative at several levels as both a process and product of this research. Firstly there is the idea of the Teaching Story that seems a potentially useful tool for teachers to reflect upon their own practice. Secondly, there is the process whereby centres can construct an overall Teaching Story which we called the Centre Teaching Story. This could be developed from observations conducted by practitioners in the course of their everyday work, by focusing on (a) adults; (b) children; and (c) specific learning/teaching contexts. And thirdly, for the purposes of this research there is the Summary of Centre Teaching Stories constructed from the rich data of the ethnographic observations and analysis. The summary categories in the seven respective Centre Teaching Stories of this project were then used as a focus for the observations that demonstrated the Teaching Story in Action. It is again important to note that the concept of the Teaching Story emerging from this phase of the research is an approach and/or process, and it is not until phase three of the research that the Teaching Story will be developed into a part of an overall framework for assessment and evaluation.

There is, however, a fourth level in the process of developing the Teaching Story. From the Summary of Centre Teaching Stories data presented at the conclusion of the previous section, the researchers then identified an element reflective of each Strand of Te Whāriki to provide the focus for observation of the programme, and in particular the role of adults as teachers within it. As stated earlier in this report, it is unrealistic for programmes to always measure themselves against all 18 goals listed in Te Whāriki; (and/or for teachers to assess children against the 117 listed outcomes). This is too cumbersome. While each of the seven centres' overall Teaching Stories acknowledged the importance of the environment, of families, and for some the place of management, the data highlighted that the most important component in providing a good learning environment for children was the adult as a teacher. However, it is still the child the researchers decided to focus on because it is the child who experiences the programme (both good and bad) that is constructed by the adults. The Learning and Teaching Story Framework (overleaf) is the result. This uses the child's voice to provide the initial questions centres need to ask of themselves as they begin their journey of evaluation. These five questions asked from a child's perspective:

- capture the essence of the case study teaching stories which are derived from the observation data and its subsequent analysis;
- are designed to guide a centre's reflection on the effectiveness of its programme in relation to the strands of Te Whāriki; and
- sit alongside their respective elements of the Learning Story framework (Carr);

- identify the key tasks of an effective teacher who can provide responsive, respectful, reciprocal relationships in ensuring that the centre programme has positive outcomes for children; and
- provide information about the quality of programmes by encapsulating the key research on quality.
- provide the framework for the analysis of observations towards constructing a centre's own Teaching Story.

Furthermore these questions, like the "dispositions for learning" (Carr,1997b) of the Learning Stories are a progression although not necessarily in sequential order. For example, the question for the strand of Belonging is a crucial foundation for supporting successful learning by children.

A Framework for Assessment and Evaluation Using Learning and Teaching Stories

	A Learning Story for Children (Carr 1998)	A Teaching Story for Adults		
	Dispositions for Learning	A Child's Voice	Adult Relationships Are Responsive, Reciprocal, and Respectful When They:	Theoretical Base
Belonging	Finding anything of interest here	How do you appreciate and understand my interests and abilities and those of my family?	Appreciate Understand children and families	Ecological context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), dispositions (Carr, 1997b; Katz, 1993), cultural context (McNaughton, 1995)
Wellbeing	Being involved	How do you meet my daily needs with care and sensitive consideration?	Show care and sensitive consideration	Respect (Gerber, 1984), reciprocal sensitive interactions (Howes, Phillips, & Whitebrook, 1992), social space (Katz, 1991), temperament (Thomas, Chess, & Birch, 1970; Kohnstamm, 1988), emotional climate of learning (Smiley & Dweck, 1994)
Exploration	Engaging with challenge and persisting when difficulties arise	How do you engage my mind, offer challenges, and extend my world?	Engage children and extend their horizons	Guided participation scaffolding (Bruner, 1995; Vygotsky, 1987), schemas (Meade with Cubey, 1995), engagement (Pascal, 1996), motivation (Smiley & Dweck, 1994)
Communication	Expressing a point of view	How do you invite me to listen and communicate, and respond to my own particular efforts?	Invite and respond to children's language	Joint attention (Rogoff, 1990), responsive communication (Howes, 1983, 1986), inter-subjectivity (Rogoff, 1990)
Contribution	Taking responsibility	How do you encourage and facilitate my endeavours to be part of a group?	Encourage and facilitate a role for individuals in a group	Joint attention (Rogoff, 1990), equal power, joint problem solving (Smith, 1996b), (Vygotsky, 1987)

It should be noted that this tabulated framework does not include the observational and/or reflective categories of learning environments, connections with families and community, and management values and processes. The priority focus of the framework is on the Teaching Story of the adult, but this role must be seen as inclusive of their relationship to the learning environment, families, and management. Model 2(b) expresses this best.

Rationale for a "Child's Voice"

The idea of focusing on the "child's voice" in defining and evaluating quality is consistent with current understanding of early childhood centre quality. Langsted (1994) and Jensen (1994) have documented how in Denmark children's perspectives have been included in definitions of high quality early childhood services. In New Zealand, the importance of focusing on children's perspectives is also highlighted by Anne Smith's work (*see* Smith, 1995). Emerging research on children's perspectives of quality tends to include interviews with young children. In contrast, the hypothetical "child's questions" developed from the data in this project are based on observations of infants, young children, adults, and contexts.

The "child's questions" link the Teaching Stories approach to evaluation with the key elements of programme quality in relation to the Strands and Goals of Te Whāriki. The rationale underlying the specific questions asked is based on recent research and theoretical work in early childhood education and human development. The draft version of Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1993) makes preliminary reference to some relevant theoretical material. The next section provides a summary outline of some links between each Strand of Te Whāriki, the "child's question", and selected relevant research and theory.

Belonging

The "child's question" raised in relation to this strand is "*How do you appreciate and understand my interests and abilities and those of my family?*". This question is grounded in ecological approaches to human development which emphasise responsive learning contexts and reciprocal interaction (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and a socialisation model which views children's learning within family and cultural contexts (McNaughton, 1995). It is also connected to emergent work on children's dispositions for learning (Carr, 1997b; Katz, 1993).

Wellbeing

The "child's question" here is: "*How do you meet my daily needs with care and sensitive consideration?*". Gerber (1984) emphasises the importance of respectful relationships with adults to the wellbeing of infants in early childhood centres (*see also*, May, 1991). Observational research on adult-child interactions in childcare centres highlights the significant relationship between adults' appropriate caregiving, which includes their reciprocal, sensitive interactions, and children's development (e.g., Howes, Phillips, & Whitebrook, 1992; Smith, 1996a). Another aspect of sensitivity to young children's needs, described by Katz (1991), involves allowing them "social space" in early childhood centre settings. Research on temperament is also relevant to nurturing infants'/young children's wellbeing and responding to their emotional needs with care (Thomas, Chess, & Birch, 1970; Kohnstamm, 1988).

Exploration

"How do you engage my mind, offer challenges, and extend my world?" This question is connected to theoretical concepts of guided participation and scaffolding, based on Bruner's (1985) and Vygotsky's (1987) perspectives. Young children's need for challenging extensions of their thinking is evident in recent research on schemas (Meade with Cubey, 1995). The "child's question" here is also consistent with the Pascal-Bertram framework for developing effectiveness in early learning settings, where the processes of "adult engagement" and "child involvement" are key components (Pascal, 1996). In view of Dweck's motivational research, extending the world of young children who are prone to set performance goals but avoid difficulty is also important (e.g., Smiley & Dweck, 1994). Intellectual and physical challenges are both relevant.

Communication

The "child's question" here is: *"How do you invite me to listen and communicate, and respond to my own particular efforts?"*. The theoretical concepts of joint attention (Rogoff, 1990; Smith, 1996b), responsive communication (e.g., Howes, 1983, 1986; Howes, Phillips, & Whitebrook, 1992), and intersubjectivity (Rogoff, 1990, Bruner, 1995) underlie the importance of reciprocal communication, and shared understanding, between adults and young children. These are among the key elements of communication which characterise high quality interactive processes in early childhood centre settings. The focus on reciprocity and joint attention is inclusive of both expressive and receptive communication.

Contribution

"How do you encourage and facilitate my endeavours to be part of the wider group?" Affirmation of children through their interactions with adults, and encouragement to learn alongside others, are supported theoretically by work on joint attention (Rogoff, 1990); joint problem solving, and equal power (Smith, 1996b; see also Vygotsky, 1987).

Elaborating the Process

A key finding of phases one and two has been that "observation" in itself is insufficient as an evaluatory tool. Evidence collected showed that many centres are doing observations of children but that the work entailed is not always the best or the most appropriate use of adult time when children are around. The focus of most observation has been on the children towards building up child profiles rather than on the role of adults in supporting children's learning or the dynamics of particular contexts. The Learning and Teaching Story framework both broadens the scope of observations and tightens the focus. Similarly it is designed to lead the adults into a process of self-reflection and then action.

The process of elaborating and refining these questions from the abstract to the specific is a key phase in the proposed action research cycle of phase three. In that phase, we propose the following broad stages.

(a) Considering the Child's Voice:

It is proposed to develop some indicative criteria derived from research knowledge in relation to each question of the framework. These could be linked to some of the reflective questions that were part of the draft and final versions of Te Whāriki. A centre could select one or several criteria to investigate, in the sense of providing evidence for themselves of what is actually happening in various contexts or situations in relation to a question or questions.

(b) Using the Learning Story Framework for Individual Children

This involves supporting the centre to use the Learning Story framework as a way of assessing individual children's experiences. It is not intended that all children would need to be appraised this way although this could happen in time. It is more a matter of process and philosophy, and trialling how useful this is for staff, and how this can be done efficiently and effectively. Each case study in this report has an example of a Learning Story, and for the full appraisal of this process Margaret Carr's (1998) final report on the *Project for Assessing Children's Experiences* is the key resource.

(c) Constructing a Centre Teaching Story Using Centres' Observations and/or Narratives of Adults and Children

Discovering and encouraging non-threatening ways in which adults can reflect upon their own practice is crucial if there is to be any expectation that teachers will change their practices. This reflection could be achieved through the use of personal narratives in the first instance and/or by peer observations, photographs, or even video (Haggerty 1996, 1998), and/or observations of various contexts or happenings in the everyday programme. Each case study includes an indicative example of a Teaching Story of a teacher at work, although it should be noted that this was analysed for research purposes only, using the Strands of Te Whāriki. While useful as an approach for this stage of the research, it could also be appropriate to use some of the criteria developed for (a) above.

Using the data from (a), (b), and (c) it is timely then for the centre to construct an overall Centre Teaching Story. Again, there are indicative examples of what these could look like using the data from the seven centre case studies, and discussions with the centres themselves suggested that the Centre Teaching Story did provide a summary overview of their philosophy in relation to the implementation of Te Whāriki. For research purposes, it was the researcher who constructed the Centre Teaching Story, but a key aspect in trialling this approach in the next phase of the research would be to support centres to develop their own Centre Teaching Story.

(d) Appraising Some Contexts of the Programme

At this point we would trial ways in which centres could use their own Centre Teaching Story to appraise a context or an aspect of their programme which they have selected. The case studies provide indicative examples of observations from a range of contexts which are then analysed in this report by using the framework of the Centre's Teaching Story to demonstrate a Teaching Story in Action.

(e) A Time for Reflection and Action

It is then important to build in a process for reflection that can answer the following kinds of questions:

- How can we plan better for individual children?
- How can we improve our own teaching effectiveness?
- Are there changes needed in the environment?
- What do we need for professional development/training ?
- What are the policy and/or fiscal implications for management?

These are questions that can be applied to quite specific situations as well as to broader issues. It would be important in any trial, to keep the focus small and manageable. The process is likely to vary for each centre and/or each service.

Questions Arising

This report on phases one and two outlines a research process, describes a proposed product, but concludes with a series of questions:

- Is the Learning and Teaching Stories framework for assessment and evaluation sufficiently robust to work in centres that are of medium or poorer quality, and able to be used by adults without full teacher training?
- Is the Learning and Teaching Stories framework for assessment and evaluation sufficiently flexible to be appropriate and meaningful in a broader range of kindergartens, playcentres, and childcare centres than those used in the development phases of both projects?
- In what ways can individual centres incorporate their own programme philosophies through constructing their own Learning and Teaching Stories?
- What kinds of mechanisms need to be built into the framework to ensure an ongoing process of observation, reflection, and change by teachers and management?
- What kind of mechanisms and resources are needed to facilitate the assessment and evaluation process for more widespread use by teachers that can be both efficient and meaningful?
- In what ways does the process effect changes to improve quality in relation to children, adults, environment, families, and support of management?

It should be noted again that there were two overall research questions for the full evaluation project. Question one below has been the focus of phases one and two and thus the concern of this report.

Question One

- What are the key elements of programme quality in relation to the Strands and Goals of Te Whāriki, which should be the focus of evaluation practice?

The "questions arising" listed above, must then become the specific research questions of the proposed phases three and four which would then answer question two.

Question Two

- How can these features which characterise effective practice in early childhood centres be implemented into a framework for curriculum evaluation?

Research Design of Proposed Phases Three and Four

Phase three involves an action research trial, while the task of phase four is to develop a useful resource for practitioners on assessment and evaluation.

Proposed Sample

The action research, used to trial the Learning and Teaching Story framework, would be sited in three geographic locations attached to a professional development programme. The early childhood centres would work alongside a professional development co-ordinator. The sample would include playcentres, kindergartens, and childcare centres, which would be identified in consultation with professional development teams as being of average quality, in terms of having fewer qualified staff and less experience in implementing, assessing, and evaluating in regard to Te Whāriki. Two early childhood centres would be included from each of the three geographical locations.

Data Collection and Analysis

In each of the three regions, a professional development person/project researcher, supported by one of the research directors, would co-ordinate the action research process at the two early childhood centres. Drawing on the action research framework of Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), and on approaches used in related New Zealand studies (e.g., McPherson, 1994; Haggerty, 1996, 1998), an action research spiral approach would be implemented. Some details of the process may differ according to the professional development team. However, the process would invariably include spirals with planning, acting and observing, and reflecting (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

Spiral 1

- *Planning*

Each centre would develop its overall Teaching Story, beginning with considering the "child's voice" and developing Learning Stories for a small number of children. The Teaching Story would be developed from observations conducted by practitioners in the course of their everyday work.

- *Acting and Observing*

Centres would apply their Centre Teaching Story to improve practice by discussion and reflection, and observation, using their Learning and Teaching Story frameworks.

- *Reflection*

The focus would be on children's experiences, adult practice, the environment, and management roles. Reflection would include appraisal, leading to action.

Spiral 2

- *Planning*

The intention of planning would be to enhance quality with regard to Te Whāriki through a planning cycle of assessment and evaluation.

- *Acting and Observing*

Centres would carry out further observations focused on the changes implemented. Changes would be documented.

- *Reflection*

There would be a final reflection on, and analysis of, the changes made (to adults' reciprocal, responsive interactions, to the environment, and to management processes and policies).

The rationale for this approach is based in part on the evidence that action research "is considered to enhance professional learning and to foster reflective practice" in early childhood education (Rodd, 1994, p. 144). Carr and Kemmis (1986) stress that improvement and involvement are the two central goals of action research. In collaborative action research, "improved practice results from practitioner participation in the investigation of actions and issues of immediate importance" (Oja & Smulyan, 1989 p. 1).

Parallel Developments

The conclusion to this report needs to note that the development and proposed trialling of a framework for evaluation and assessment includes only kindergartens, playcentres, and childcare centres. These are early childhood services for which assessment and evaluation is similarly important (Podmore, May, & Mara, 1997). Alongside the proposed third and fourth phases, there is a proposal by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research for a parallel yet integrated study with Pacific Islands Language Centres. This would be co-ordinated by Diane Mara. It is hoped in time that parallel developments for other services would also begin.

Summary

The first two phases of this study confirm the importance of linking assessment and evaluation together. The proposed framework uses the concepts of Learning and Teaching Stories which are constructed or "woven" by each centre in the spirit of Te Whāriki. The Learning and Teaching Stories encourage teachers to reflect on their own practice and their centre's programme. Specific questions using a child's voice are raised for the next phase of the research, which would trial the Learning and Teaching framework. This proposed framework encapsulates the key elements of programme quality, viewed from a child's perspective, which should be the focus of evaluation and assessment practice.

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APPENDIX A

FLYER INTRODUCING THE PROJECT

EVALUATING EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMES USING TE WHĀRIKI

AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH PROJECT

Co-ordinators: Dr Val Podmore (NZCER), Professor Helen May (IECS)

An Overview

This is a project funded by the Ministry of Education which, in the longer term, aims to develop and trial an evaluatory framework for practitioners to undertake their own evaluation of programmes in a range of early childhood centres using the Strands and Goals of Te Whāriki. The strengthening requirements for early childhood programmes to be accountable in terms of quality and standards is an important rationale for ensuring that we have New Zealand based research and evaluatory criteria, compatible with Te Whāriki, and user friendly for practitioners. Funding from the Committee of the 6th Early Childhood Convention supported the preliminary work to get this project underway. A publication is available from the Institute for Early Childhood Studies *Quality Evaluation of Early Childhood Programmes: a Literature Review*, by Pam Cubey and Carmen Dalli (\$10). The project team will be in close contact with a parallel Ministry project at the University of Waikato co-ordinated by Margaret Carr which has been underway for two years and is looking at assessment in relation to Te Whāriki. Assessment and evaluation, as the literature review shows, are integrally linked.

There are two initial phases in this project. The first is to gather insight into the ways in which centres and organisations are already using Te Whāriki as part of their programme planning and evaluation. It is important that this project builds upon this work. The second phase involves spending time observing in a range of "good practice" early childhood centres which are using Te Whāriki. In both of these phases we are looking for "clues" or the necessary "indicators" of quality for the development of the proposed framework for evaluation which we will be presenting the Ministry in February 1998. The third phase, for which further funding will be sought, is to trial the draft evaluation framework through professional development programmes in a range of settings. After this we would hope to produce a resource for practitioners. We look forward to your interest and support with this project.

Associated with the co-ordination of this project is Diane Mara, newly appointed researcher at NZCER. Further appointments to the project are pending.

A joint project of:



NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
TE RŪNANGA O AOTEAROA MŌ TE RANGAHAU I TE MĀTAURANGA

and

INSTITUTE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES*
Te Pumanawa Rangahau Kohungahunga

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wānanga o te Upoko o i Ika a Maui



APPENDIX B

CONNECTING ASSESSMENT TO EVALUATION: A DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

Margaret Carr, 1997

PROJECT FOR ASSESSING CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES

CONNECTING ASSESSMENT EVALUATION:

A DISCUSSION DOCUMENT TO ACCOMPANY POSITION PAPER 4

Margaret Carr
University of Waikato
March 1997

STRANDS IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM	DECISION POINTS IN LEARNING STORIES	LEARNING STORY	EVALUATION: STRUCTURAL	EVALUATION: PROCESS (i) providing a learning environment	EVALUATION PROCESS (iii) Responsive and reciprocal relationships
BELONGING	FINDING SOMETHING OF INTEREST HERE	<i>Part 1:</i> The learning story begins here, when the child finds something or someone familiar or of interest. An activity may be of special interest and some of the routines and regular events are becoming familiar. At this point there may be no active involvement, but evidence of interest will be shown through watching, and apparently being comfortable about being approached. Finding an adult or another child or a space that provides a haven. We want to know what interests this child, and where and with whom he or she feels comfortable.	Good adult child ratios assist children to settle in, and to have a primary care-giver to return to in times of home-sickness. Qualified staff (working with families).	Good communication links with families. Interesting activities on offer. Warm and accessible adults. Primary caregiving arrangements.	Sensitive responses to shy children and home-sick children and their families. Observations of interest. Sympathetic responses to feelings of sadness and loss.

WELLBEING	BEING INVOLVED	<i>Part 2:</i> The child is participating, being engaged. For shy or timid children this is a major landmark in the learning story. Evidence of being involved is that the child is taking an active part: manipulating a toy, climbing, talking.	Qualified staff for sensitive entry. Adult-child ratios.	Accessible activities, a number that work best with two children.	Recognition that children have begun to be involved: observation and assistance if necessary.
EXPLORATION	ENGAGING WITH CHALLENGE AND PERSISTING WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARISE	<i>Part 3:</i> Has the child chosen to do something difficult, and what happens when things get tricky? This part of the story is based on the assumption that coping with difficulty and uncertainty is a large part of what learning is all about.	Adult-child ratios. Qualified staff.	Difficult and challenging activities and situations will be part of the programme. Adults will model tackling difficulty and uncertainty.	Children will be helped to choose difficulty and to persist when problems arise. Adults will assist children to manage their emotion, and may introduce difficult situations and ideas.
COMMUNICATION	EXPRESSING A POINT OF VIEW	<i>Part 4:</i> A learning story is also about strategies for communicating with others, or expressing ideas and feelings: through talk, or painting, or whatever.	Qualified staff. Group size. Adult-child ratios.	A range of expressive media available.	Language acquisition and development: recognising the purpose of the expression, and encouraging its development. Observation of children's special talents and interests. Adults involved with the children, not with administrative tasks.

CONTRIBUTION	TAKING RESPONSIBILITY	<i>Part 5:</i> In a group setting this turned out to be a common feature of a learning story: children looking out for and looking after each other, often making sure things are fair and others (including self) are not left out. It often included taking a role in the programme: choosing a song, negotiating with adults about whether the outside playground or certain toys are available.	Qualified staff. Group size. Adult-child ratios.	Opportunities for children to have a say in the programme. Opportunities for collaboration.	Symmetrical patterns of responsibility and joint attention. Assessment procedures will also include symmetrical patterns of responsibility. Discussions about assumptions to do with "being good", "being clever", and "being a girl": making the "given" problematic. Initiating interchanges for establishing and maintaining children's rights.
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APPENDIX C

QUESTIONS FOR THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

What would be the most useful scenario for observing the ways in which adults are enabling the strands and goals of *Te Whāriki* to support the learning and development of children?

1. What key elements of effective adult-child interaction should we focus on in our observations?

Probes:

The research literature, for example, would suggest sensitivity and respect, responsiveness including power relationships, stimulation and evidence of scaffolding. Do you agree?

Are there any other elements?

What is the most appropriate context for observing these?

2. In what ways can we evaluate the adult's role in constructing the environment for children?

Probes: Likewise, the research literature highlights the importance of things like: responsiveness, awareness of safety, scaffolding, inclusiveness.

What do you suggest are some of the indicators of good practice in these areas?

Are there any other areas?

What is the most appropriate context for observing these areas?

We would like guidance about observing individual children.

3. What would be the most useful focus when observing individual children in relation to their experience with the strands and goals of *Te Whāriki*?

Probes: For example, is it more useful to observe the child over a period of time, engaged in a range of happenings, which we then classify in relation to good practice re *Te Whāriki*? Or, is it more useful to select some more specific episodes such as a particular routine, happening of play, or interactions that are likely to be illuminating of effective or ineffective practice?

4. Which specific strands and goals of *Te Whāriki* would be the most appropriate to include as primary indicators of effective practice?

- Strand 1: Well-being - Mana Atua
- Strand 2: Belonging - Mana Whenua
- Strand 3: Contribution - Mana Tangata
- Strand 4: Communication - Mana Reo

- Strand 5: Exploration - Mana Aotūroa

Note: It is possible that focusing on one particular strand and/or particular goals may be more illuminating than on others in revealing good practice. In addition, some selectiveness is necessary for focused and accurate observations.

5. How appropriate are the five "happenings" as observational contexts for evaluating the implementation of *Te Whāriki* in early childhood centres?

Probe: What are the likely insights into effective practice, by focusing on:

- arrivals and departures
- food (mealtimes or morning/afternoon tea)
- story reading/telling
- manipulative play (an indoor fine motor activity)
- outdoor (gross motor) activity (or an outing)?

Probe: What are the likely difficulties with focusing on:

- arrivals and departures
- food (mealtimes or morning/afternoon tea)
- story reading/telling
- manipulative play (an indoor fine motor activity)
- outdoor (gross motor) activity (or an outing)?

Probe: Should any of the proposed happenings be replaced?

(If yes)

Please specify which of the proposed happenings should be replaced and suggest an alternative context or happening.

APPENDIX D

INFORMATION SHEET FOR CENTRES

EVALUATING EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMES USING TE WHĀRIKI

AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH PROJECT

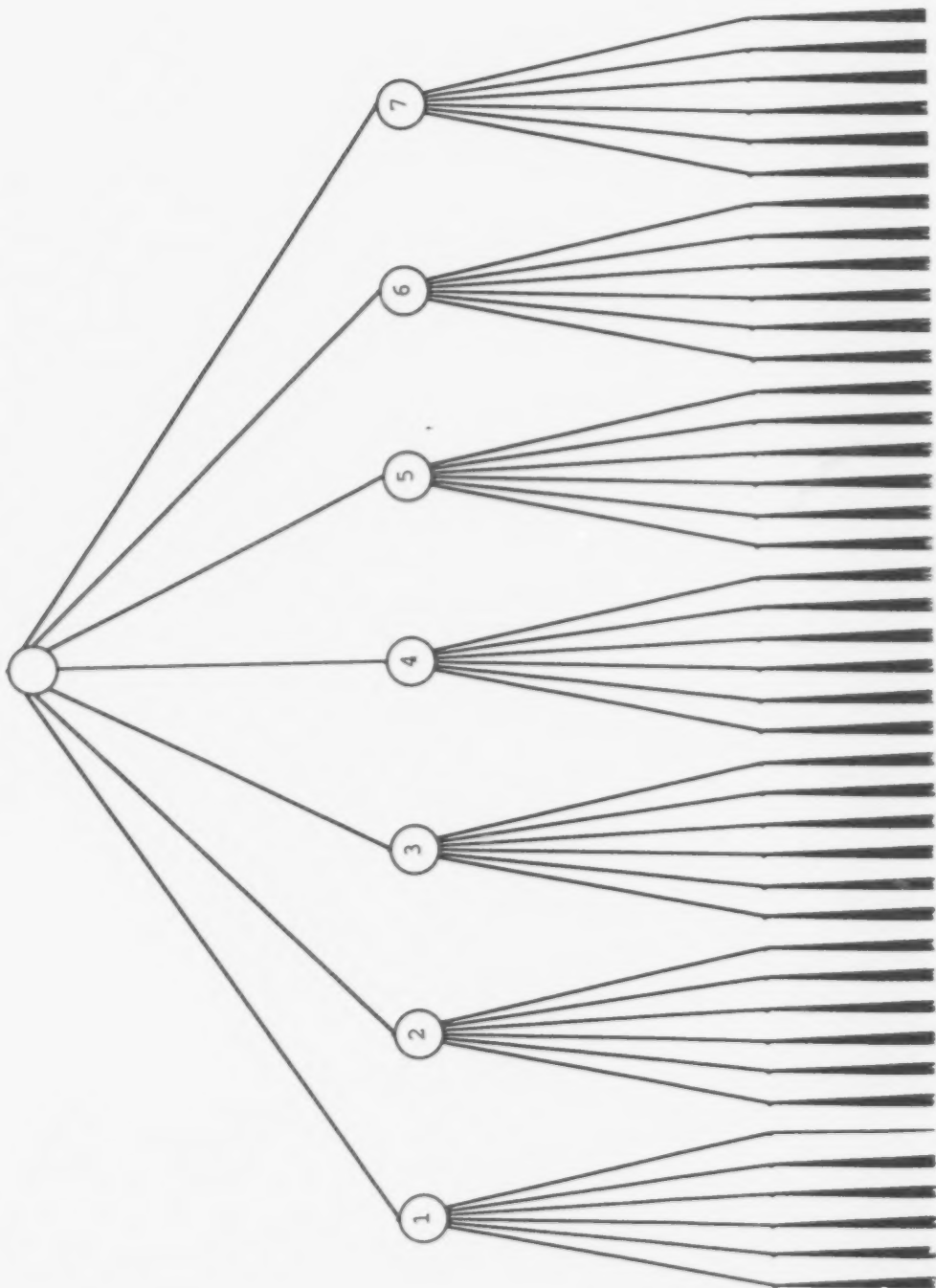
- Co-ordinators: Dr Val Podmore (NZCER), Professor Helen May (IECS).
 - Project Director: Diane Mara (NZCER)
 - Field Researchers: Pam Cubey, Sarah Te One (WCE)
-
- The fieldwork for phase two of the project will occur in seven early childhood centres which will provide a range of ages of children and services. Consent will be sought from staff and parents at the centres.
 - The time spent in each centre will be a week. This would include an interview with senior staff prior to, and after the observation time. It could be more appropriate for these to occur at other times than in the actual week agreed upon. This will be negotiated to fit in with centre arrangements and priorities.
 - Each centre will have one researcher who will also write up the observations and provide feedback to the centre.
 - For the observations we are wanting to see a centre in every day mode. At some point we would like to track several individual children for a period of time and then a couple of adults. This would be discussed at the preliminary interview. We would also like some suggestions from each centre over aspects of their programme they think might be useful for us to observe.
 - After these observations we hope to develop a trial framework for evaluation. We don't have one yet so the observations are **not** intended to evaluate the centres.
 - With the help of many people we have developed some draft models (enclosed) which give an idea of the focus of an evaluation framework. We hope that the observations will provide lots of examples and a clearer understanding of whether these models are useful to centres.
 - During the observations we would hope to be like a "fly on the wall" although where possible we would record straight onto laptop computers so we won't be totally "fly like!" We hope to be sensitive to the adults' and children's wishes during the observations and to keep centres informed at all times.
 - The observations from each centre would be coded as relational examples using the areas in the draft models, i.e., environment, family and community, adult relationships, children, management. We would then like to code these examples alongside the five strands of Te Whāriki. The analysis of each centre will be separate but we would be looking for the relevance and appropriateness across all the centres.
 - Confidentiality will be assured. Stored observational records will not have the centres' or participants' actual names recorded on them. Centres will not be identified in any reports.

APPENDIX E

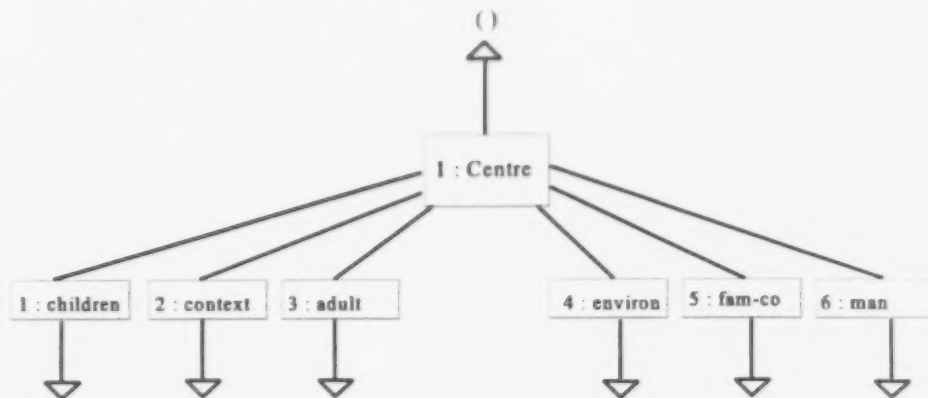
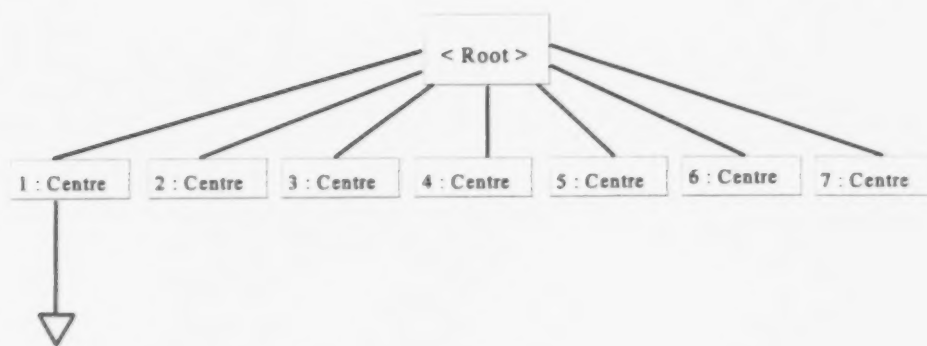
NUD*DIST TREES FOR CATEGORISING OBSERVATIONAL DATA

NUD*IST "tree"

for qualitative analyses of observations of
seven early childhood centres

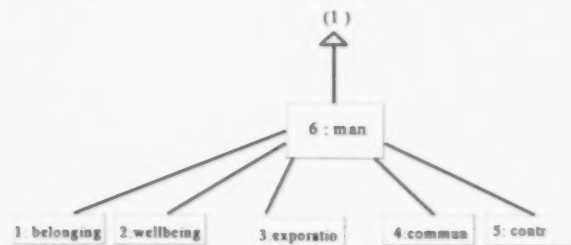
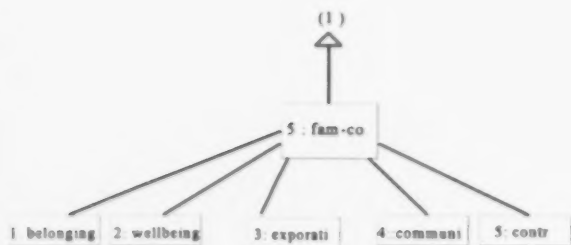
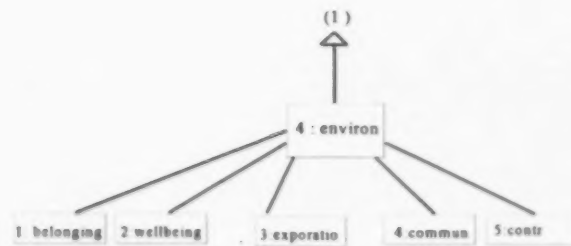
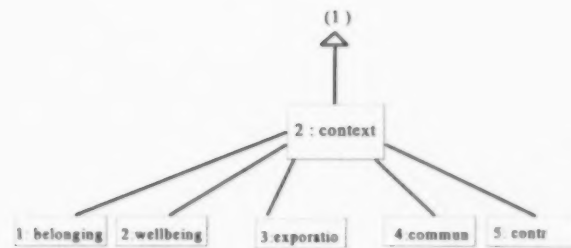
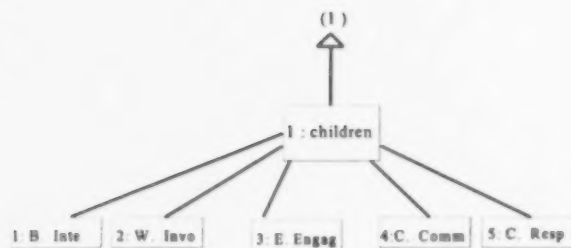


TE WHĀRIKI



KEY:

- 1: children
- 2: context
- 3: adult
- 4: environment
- 5: family and community
- 6: management



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APPENDIX F

FLYER FOR NEXT PHASE

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

**Using Observation and Reflection for Enhancing Effectiveness in
Early Childhood Centres**

PROJECT FOR HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES USING THE STRANDS OF TE WHĀRIKI TO TRIAL THE FRAMEWORK OF “LEARNING AND TEACHING STORIES”

- **LEARNING STORIES THAT EMPOWER LEARNERS**
(Carr, University of Waikato)

- **TEACHING STORIES THAT CREATE RESPONSIVE
RECIPROCAL AND RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE
PLACES AND THINGS**
(May, IECS, Podmore and Mara, NZCER)

LEARNING AND TEACHING STORIES

are facilitated by adults:

- **observing and listening to children**
- **providing a learning environment**
- **making connections with family and community**
- **being supported by management policies and processes**

**A New Zealand action research project to trial the framework in a range of
early childhood centres**